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ABSTRACT

Based on the assumption that most fathers want to act responsibly, but often do not know how or face obstacles--many of which are created by their own behavior--this Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum uses a discussion approach and experiential learning to help men think differently about their role as fathers and about altering their behavior. This guide describes the curriculum and details the 20-session program. The guide's introduction provides information on the experiential learning cycle and suggestions for starting the peer group. The introduction also discusses confidentiality and what to expect in a group, and provides tips for facilitating peer support groups and managing behavior problems. The sessions, lasting 90 to 120 minutes, are as follows: (1) "Introduction to Responsible Fatherhood"; (2) "What Are My Values?"; (3) "Boys to Men: Experiencing Manhood"; (4) "The Art of Communication"; (5) "Fathers as Providers"; (6) "Noncustodial Fathers: Rights and Responsibilities"; (7) "Developing Values in Children"; (8) "Coping as a Single Father"; (9) "Dealing with Children's Behaviors"; (10) "Relationships: Being a Friend, Partner, Parent, and Employee"; (11) "Understanding Male-Female Relationships"; (12) "Managing Conflict and Handling Anger"; (13) "Handling Anger and Conflict on the Job"; (14) "Surviving on the Job"; (15) "The Issue of Race/Racism. Part I" and "Part II"; (16) "Taking Care of Business"; (17) "Managing Your Time and Money"; (18) "Building a Support Network: Who's on Your Side?"; (19) "Alcohol and Drug Use and Abuse. Part I and II"; and (20) "Healthful Eating." Each session includes a list of key concepts to be

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covered, materials checklist for each activity, instructions for each activity, handouts, and leader resources. (KB)

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The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum

Eileen Hayes

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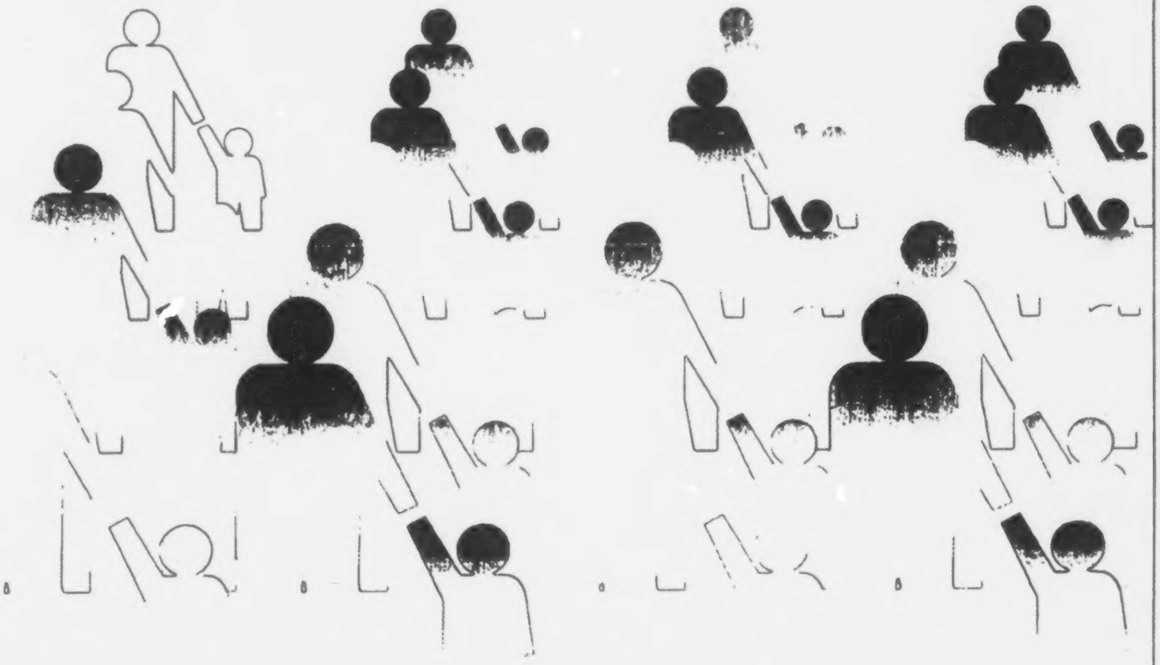

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The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum

A curriculum developed for the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration

Eileen Hayes

with Kay Sherwood

PS 029693

MDRC

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Although intended for use in a wide range of support groups, this curriculum was developed as part of a specific project: the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration (PFS), a national demonstration project that operated in the 1990s. PFS combined job training and placement, peer support groups, and other services with the goal of increasing the earnings and child support payments of unemployed noncustodial fathers of children on welfare, improving their parenting and communication skills, and providing an opportunity for them to participate more fully and effectively in the lives of their children. Organized around this curriculum, the peer support component — the "glue" of the program — was designed to accomplish a number of goals including encouraging positive parental behavior and sexual responsibility, strengthening commitment to work, and enhancing life skills.

Each of the seven PFS sites used the *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum*, which originated in a curriculum — *Fatherhood Development: A Curriculum for Young Fathers* — that was developed by Public/Private Ventures and was written by Pamela Wilson and Jeffery Johnson. Made up of 20 sessions, the *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* guides each support group through activities, exercises, and discussions that help participants make progress on a number of issues, including communicating with their children and partners, managing conflict at home and on the job, and dealing with racial discrimination at the workplace.

Throughout the demonstration — with input, guidance, and feedback from peer support facilitators in each of the sites — the curriculum was refined, revised, and retooled. In carrying out this work, the senior author benefited greatly from her experiences as lead trainer of the facilitators and her ongoing association with them. Over the course of eight years, activities that promised to be helpful were added and those that were not as effective were discarded. Conferences were held at which peer support facilitators from all seven sites came together to share stories about running peer support groups and to refine the curriculum. It is impossible to thank by name all the facilitators whose experience working with the curriculum led to its continuing improvement, but we want at least to acknowledge those who gave intensive feedback not only at the conferences but also in additional small group meetings: Larry Jackson, Dayton, Ohio; Ray Jackson, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Ofelia Parris, Los Angeles, California; and Vernon Washington, Jacksonville, Florida.

Along with the facilitators, Earl Johnson contributed invaluable feedback on the content of the curriculum through his active participation at all conferences as well as through his observations of many peer support groups in his role at MDRC as ethnographic researcher in the PFS project.

At MDRC, John Robertson drafted parts of the Introduction, and Mary Andes and Michael Sack offered valuable input, with Jackie Peters also providing assistance. Robert Weber was the dedicated and meticulous editor of the final version, which Stephanie Cowell prepared for typesetting. Nigel Vann, at NPCL, also offered helpful comments. Edward Rowe of Rowe Design Group and Regina Barcello created the lively and accessible typographical design.

Finally, gratitude is due the funders of the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration, who made this work possible, and the thousands of men who participated in PFS peer support groups.

We hope that all this effort by so many people has resulted in a curriculum that is a useful, creative, interactive tool — one that can be used productively in a variety of support groups for men. We are pleased to share it with you and welcome your feedback.

Eileen Hayes

Training for Facilitators Who Will Use the Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum

The leader or facilitator who implements this curriculum is central to its success. Facilitators need to feel very comfortable in their role, and with the material in the curriculum, before leading sessions. Therefore, we strongly recommend that all prospective facilitators receive training to prepare them to conduct the sessions effectively.

Training accomplishes several important goals:

- It provides a forum for facilitators to examine their own attitudes and stereotypes about men and fathers and to hear a variety of perspectives from others.
- It offers facilitators the opportunity to see trainers model many of the activities as they were envisioned.
- It gives participants a supportive environment to practice communication and facilitation skills and get constructive feedback from trainers and other facilitators.
- It gives facilitators the opportunity to network with others in similar positions and to share ideas. This network will be a useful resource to facilitators when they face challenging situations in their groups in the future.

Training can be obtained from the National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL) in Washington, DC. They offer three-day skill-building workshops throughout the country. NPCL also developed and distributes a revised version of *Fatherhood Development: A Curriculum for Young Fathers*, which is best suited for fathers aged 16 to 30 and for early intervention programs that work with young fathers. Please contact them at 888-528-NPCL for additional information. Training is available also from Eileen Hayes, the senior author of the *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum*. She may be reached at 401-861-4209.

The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum

Responsible Fatherhood as a Learning Method

All activities in the curriculum are intended to assist the facilitator in helping the men think differently about their roles as fathers and about altering their behavior. The *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* is based on discussion. It assumes that most people want to act responsibly but often don't know how to or face obstacles, many of which are created by their own behavior. Neither the curriculum nor the facilitator attempts to tell participants how to run their lives (although the curriculum does provide much relevant information about the typical problems of unemployed noncustodial parents). Instead, the method relies on participants' own experiences and opinions — expressed through discussion — to show group members that there are alternatives to their unsuccessful past behavior.

Each session of the *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* has three parts:

- A beginning exercise that is usually called "What's New?"
- One or several activities that require the active involvement of everyone
- A closing activity called "Feedback/Wrap-up"

The activities almost always have two parts. The first part is an exercise that presents some new ideas in an interesting way. The second part helps group members think about these ideas by means of a discussion structured around a set of questions.

During the discussion, the facilitator must decide whether to move on before the group loses its focus or whether to let the discussion continue. It is always better to move on to another idea before the group loses interest. If the discussion is leading the group to consider important issues, or if the group is using a topic to get to know one another, then it is valuable to extend the time committed to the exercise. If the group is not responding to the exercise, it is better to move on and try another activity.

The Experiential Learning Cycle

Educational programming that gets people actively involved in their learning is referred to as *experiential*. The *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* activities have been designed to recognize the knowledge and experience that the fathers bring to the group. Rather than telling the men how to live their lives, the curriculum sets up experiences that enable them to draw conclusions to examine their attitudes, to get excited about a new idea, to see a skill in action, to learn from other fathers, and to practice new ways of relating to their children.

This approach is based on a conceptual framework called the *experiential learning cycle*. The cycle traces the path of learning from an initial training experience all the way to the creation of a "mini-action" plan for making positive changes in the fathers' lives. The discussion questions after each activity are designed to cover five important stages in the experiential learning cycle that pave the way to meaningful learning: (1) experiencing, (2) reporting, (3) processing, (4) generalizing, and (5) applying.

1. Experiencing. In this first stage of learning, group members participate in an activity that produces information about themselves, about communicating in relationships, about the role of fathers, about reactions to dilemmas, and so on. The initial activity might be done individually, in small groups, or in the larger group. Sometimes the first experience is structured as a game or contest. Examples of such experiences used in the curriculum include:

- Role playing
- Problem solving or sharing information in small groups
- Giving and receiving feedback in pairs
- Brainstorming
- Communicating nonverbally
- Analyzing dilemmas or case studies
- Completing a handout
- Competing in Fact or Myth games
- Debating an issue

The experiencing stage of the learning cycle enables the fathers to develop a common base of information and experience to use in the discussion that follows. *Avoid the temptation to end a session before fully discussing (or processing) an activity*. Sometimes the activity is so much fun that facilitators get caught up in the experience and forget what they are trying to accomplish. If the process stops at this stage — just after the experience — learning will be left to chance. The subsequent four steps of the learning cycle are more important than the initial experiencing stage.

2. Reporting. In the reporting stage of the learning cycle, the fathers share what they saw or how they felt during the activity in the experiencing stage. The question here is, "What happened, and how did it go?" Talking about what happened makes each individual's experience available to all group members. In reporting on their experience with the opening activity, the fathers may be asked to discuss both their thoughts and their feelings. It is common for individuals to report that they experienced the activity in different ways or to say that their reactions varied quite a bit. The following methods can help to make individual's reactions and observations known to the group:

- Record participants' responses on newsprint (especially in brainstorming activities).
- Go around the room asking volunteers to share what they experienced in the activity and how they felt about it.
- If participants have worked in small groups, have each group report to the entire group.

3. Processing (Discussing Patterns and Dynamics). Processing is a critical stage in the learning cycle. Now that some baseline information has been reported and shared, participants systematically begin to *examine* what they experienced and how they felt about it. The question here is, "What kinds of things happened, and why?" Processing is the talking-through stage in which participants begin to recognize patterns in the ways people think, feel, and react. The discussion might lead a participant to see that interrupting and judging someone seriously interferes with effective communication. Perhaps this individual had always seen himself as a good communicator; now he realizes that he has some destructive habits. Often participants notice interesting similarities and differences among themselves. Occasionally, a comment causes someone to gain new insights or perspectives. Perhaps the discussion leads a father to see how his child's mother may be reacting to something he's doing or how his child might be affected by ongoing conflict in the parents' relationship. Among the techniques that can facilitate processing are:

- Calling attention to recurring themes in the reports of individuals
- Focusing on the particular roles that individual fathers played during the activity
- Asking opened-ended questions, such as "What has fatherhood been like so far?"

In preparing to conduct a session, plan carefully how to handle the processing stage. Although the discussion points in the curriculum typically provide open-ended questions, you should preview the questions to be sure that they are appropriate for your style and for the sensibilities of your audience. Too little time processing an activity can leave participants with "unfinished business" and unanswered questions. Some of the men may be left behind or distracted because they are still trying to understand something about the experience they went through in the opening activity.

4. Generalizing (Developing Real-World Principles). In this stage of the learning cycle, participants are asked to make connections between the opening activity and everyday life. The key question here is, "What have we learned?" Encourage participants to focus on situations in their personal or work lives that might relate to the activity. Their task is to develop some principles from the activity that they can apply in their own lives. Some strategies for generalizing from the processing stage are:

- Having each participant complete the sentence "The most important thing I learned today was. . . ."
- Asking participants to identify realistic situations in their lives which relate to what they learned from the activity

During this generalizing stage, it is useful to write what participants say they have learned on newsprint or on a blackboard. When hearing these responses, (1) take time to help individuals complete their thoughts so that others understand what they mean, (2) accept controversial responses, and (3) avoid evaluating individual statements. Feel free to add information of your own to augment participants' learning.

5. Applying (Planning Effective Use of Learning). The final stage of the experiential learning cycle is what makes the approach practical. The applying stage takes the generalizing stage one step further. Whereas the focus of the generalizing stage is to think of the key concepts of the session in terms of real-life situations, the focus of the applying stage is for the fathers to figure out how to apply these ideas in real life. The question here is, "How will you use what you have learned?" The following strategies can help participants to apply their learning to actual situations in which they are involved:

- Having participants in groups of two or three take turns helping one another apply generalizations to their personal problem situations
- Having group members make concrete promises to one another about actions they plan to take and changes they will make (individuals are more likely to carry out planned actions that they share with others)
- Practicing new behaviors by role playing real-life situations

The following example demonstrates the experiential learning cycle using "Values Voting" (Activity 2-4 in Session 2).

Case Example: Values Voting

During the *experiencing stage*, fathers think about and then express their reactions to different — often conflicting — beliefs about how to live their lives by "voting" on values. (That is, they walk to the sign "Agree," "Disagree," or "Unsure" that best describes their opinions about the value statement being discussed.) The participants discuss each value statement and why they agree or disagree with it or are unsure about it. Typically, part of this experience is the discovery of diverse values among the fathers.

During the *reporting stage*, participants discuss how easy or hard it was to vote on these values. They may also discuss why some values are harder than others to vote on or to define (see discussion questions 1 and 2 in "Values Voting," Activity 2-4). Because adults are rarely asked to express their fundamental values, the novelty of this experience is often reported by participants.

In the *processing stage*, the facilitator asks a question such as, "How much does your behavior in the outside world fit with what you've said here in the group?" The facilitator tries to make the experience of values voting meaningful in the outside world in order to get the men thinking about the patterns in their lives.

In the *generalizing stage*, participants may identify principles like these: (1) Values don't always determine people's behavior. (2) People feel better about themselves when they live according to their own — not someone else's — values. (3) A person's values may conflict in some situations where it is difficult to decide on a course of action. (4) As people learn, their values may change.

Finally, in the *applying stage*, the facilitator asks, "Which values reflect the things that you want to change about yourself, and how can you do this?" The facilitator asks the participants to think about their values and how they can impart those values to their children.

Not all activities will follow this precise order. It may be hard, for instance, to separate the reporting from the processing. However, in planning and implementing the sessions, keep the five-stage learning cycle in mind. With practice it gets easier to move the group through these stages and to focus on the bottom line: behavioral change.

Modifying the Curriculum

The *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* is designed to provide continuity from session to session and, over time, to build on concepts, information, and skills. The goals of each session are to introduce information that can enhance participants' lives and to continue the process of building group cohesion and mutual support. The descriptions of each session and activity give the facilitator guidance and background information, and — except for audiovisual materials and supplies needed to carry out activities (including handouts for each participant) — the curriculum is complete and self-contained.

Although peer group facilitators may use the curriculum as it stands without making significant changes, there are many ways to modify it to match the interests of participants and the varying features of programs. The following suggestions will help group leaders adapt the *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* to meet the needs of their group and program.

Choosing Among Activities. Many sessions include more than one activity with the same general objectives. To choose the activities that best suit the participants, ask the following questions:

- Are the men comfortable doing experiential activities? Given the choice, would they prefer to tackle a situation "hands on"? To what degree do the men resist working in small groups or role playing, or using other methods in the curriculum?
- To what extent can the men relate to the objectives of the session? For example, if they are exploring the needs of their children, the amount of contact that they have with their children may influence which activities you choose.
- What is the mood of the group? Do the men seem to prefer activities that are more fun and more active? Do they need to experience more successes? Have they bonded together, or do they need to work further on group cohesion before taking on particular topics or activities?
- To what extent are participants able to take charge of their learning? Do they involve themselves in the tasks of the session, or do they need a lot of guidance and prodding?

Modifying Case Studies and Problem Situations. Many curriculum activities use case studies and problem situations to structure the practice of decision making, assertiveness, and small-group skills. Leaders may modify these (or create new ones) to include specific situations that participants face. For example, because the ages of the fathers and their children may vary greatly, it is important to create situations that reflect this diversity. Similarly, case studies and problem situations should reflect the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of all participants.

Rearranging the Order of the Sessions. To be effective, the *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* must meet the varying needs of the noncustodial fathers. The men must feel a strong sense of ownership of the group. One way to impart this is to give participants some control over the topics discussed as well as the sequencing of topics. If you do decide to rearrange topics, try to keep sessions about similar topics together. For instance, one series of topics relates to children, and another is about relationships; such sequences should stay together. Before changing the order of the sessions, review the "What's New?" and "Feedback/Wrap-up" activities, because they connect the sessions in the current order of the curriculum.

Adding Sessions. As participants become comfortable with peer support, they may suggest topics that they would like to cover. Capitalize on this interest by designing your own sessions, following the general format provided in the Responsible Fatherhood curriculum.

Adjusting to Reading and Writing Difficulties. Some participants in a group may have difficulty reading and/or writing. Because many activities use reading or writing as a tool, adjust your methods to compensate for such difficulties. If reading presents a problem, the facilitator or a group member may read the activity aloud. If writing is a problem, alter the exercise so that writing is not required, or complete it in a small group where at least one member has writing skills.

Using Presenters and Leaders from Outside the Group

The curriculum suggests two ways to incorporate outsiders: as *presenters* of a specific topic (who discuss and share their own experiences) or as *substitute leaders* for one or more sessions about a specific topic (such as race and ethnic issues or how to manage conflict and handle anger).

The key to using outside presenters or leaders effectively is choosing people who are comfortable with themselves and who are knowledgeable and articulate about the session's topic. In addition, substitute leaders should be highly skilled in group-process techniques. Outside presenters who are brought in to share their own experiences should generally be positive role models for the participants and should be enough like them in terms of race, ethnicity, and other characteristics to be convincing.

Starting the Peer Group

Setting the Stage

Before peer group sessions begin, the facilitator needs to *set the stage* to ensure a positive experience for everyone. This includes selecting and meeting with group members, selecting a room, and preparing materials for the sessions.

Selecting the Group. Peer support will be most successful if:

- The group is made up of 8 to 15 participants; and
- Participants speak the same language. (If most group members speak Spanish, for example, the leader should also speak Spanish.)

Peer support can be effective only if the group is small enough to become cohesive. If a group has more than 20 participants, the leader usually spends more time on "crowd control" than on teaching and facilitating discussion. On the other hand, a group with fewer than five members may not generate the energy to propel the group process; if participants drop out over time, the group can become too small to be effective.

Selecting a Room. The peer group's environment should foster interaction. The meeting room should be:

- Large enough for the number of participants, but not too large; avoid multipurpose rooms and auditoriums.
- Private; outsiders should not be free to walk in and out of the meeting space.
- Quiet; traffic noises or loud voices from the next room can be very distracting.
- Clean and well lit.

Seating should be arranged in a circle to facilitate discussion. Making the room attractive by hanging posters and artwork will improve the group's dynamics. Coffee and soft drinks will help group members relax.

Preparing Material for the Sessions. Part of preparing for peer group sessions is for the facilitator to be adequately trained. Read the curriculum thoroughly, and organize all handouts, markers, and other materials in advance. It's helpful to arrive at the meeting room early, preferably 30 minutes before a session begins. *Preparation makes the facilitator's job a lot easier and much more effective.*

Before each session, set priorities, and decide on your objectives. Plan which activities (and which steps within each activity) are most important in achieving the session's objectives. In general, give the highest priority to activities and steps that build skills (those that practice applying concepts to real-life situations).

Working with Involuntary Participants

Members of a peer support group in PFS often were ordered to attend sessions by a judge, by an administrative officer of the court, or by a child support enforcement official. Attendance was mandatory in many sites, and there could be legal consequences for failure to comply. Mandatory attendance also raised special issues for the PFS program, the peer support group, and the facilitator.

Understandably, noncustodial fathers who have been ordered to attend meetings of a support group will at first be mistrustful and cautious about participating. To overcome this barrier, the facilitator needs to listen carefully and must try to understand each participant's experiences and point of view. It is not unusual for a participant to question the facilitator's interest and to see the facilitator as an enforcer of the courts.

Besides showing interest and concern, the facilitator can establish an effective group with involuntary participants by communicating clearly about participation requirements and consequences at the start of the program. Be clear from the outset about what constitutes satisfactory participation, and enforce those expectations consistently throughout the program. Participants will often test the rules and how strictly the facilitator enforces them. For example, members who are late or who miss a session might be required to make up the time or to repeat the session later; those who fall asleep during a session might be asked to lead an activity or to repeat the session they slept through; those who verbally abuse staff or other group members might be required to apologize in public, with the warning that further incidents will not be tolerated. After ground rules are established, enforce them consistently. However, if the consequences for breaking rules are perceived to be unfair, the facilitator may lose the group's trust. It is a difficult balance. Facilitators should think through such issues in advance and should be prepared to respond appropriately when an incident occurs.

Beginning with Each Group Member

Setting the stage for a peer support group requires the facilitator to think about how to use the curriculum, how to set up the room, how many participants will show up, and whether the participants will accept the facilitator. Yet the most important part of beginning is the relationship that is being formed between the facilitator and each member of the group — especially where many members have been ordered to attend and are not present because they volunteered and are interested.

The group leader should begin by having a one-on-one meeting with each man before he joins the group. This will give an opportunity to gauge how willing that father is to participate in the peer support group, and also to learn something about his style and attitude outside the group setting. Often the man will have a long story about how he was wronged. He may blame the mother of his child or the welfare department for forcing him to come. Whatever his belief, resentment is common. He has convinced himself of the truth of his story, and at this point it is not constructive to disagree. Listening, however, pays off. If the facilitator takes the time to hear what this father has to say and encourages him to speak honestly, the man is more likely to believe that the facilitator has something meaningful to offer, which makes it easier to help him shape solutions later, during the course of the sessions.

In these one-on-one meetings, the facilitator will discover men who are hostile and who want nothing to do with the group. But by pointing out that he or she is not responsible for the order to attend ("That is between the judge and you"), the facilitator can remain neutral and can steer the conversation toward the man's objections and concerns. This frees the facilitator to explore how the participant's time can be used most productively. To shift the conversation away from resentment and anger, ask the man what he can gain from the group other than "getting the court off your back" (or whoever he blames for causing him to participate). Then help him focus on using the group to get what he wants out of life. The key questions are, "What responsibility do you as a father have for supporting your children?" and "Do you really want to support them?" The only participants who do not stand to benefit are those who want no part of being a father. The facilitator is in a good position to work out a satisfactory agreement with any man who has the goal of being a responsible father.

Often a father who is having a difficult time accepting the requirement that he participate in a program or peer support group can understand the purpose of participating when it is explained by another group member. This can be done individually or in a group. Another participant, who did not accept the program initially but has come to value it, can help a resistant father see what can be gained from participating. Some men will remain hostile, nonetheless, and yet it is possible for them to remain angry and hostile — especially about how they may have been treated by "the system," the mother of their children, or others — and still benefit from participating in peer group support if they are sincere about fulfilling their role as father.

Occasionally a man will be referred who does not want anything to do with his children and who is openly hostile. He should not be put into a group, because he does not support its purpose of helping each man to fulfill his role as a father. The program needs alternatives, such as individual counseling sessions to address why a father is unwilling to accept his responsibility. It is important that the program not let such a father off with no requirements, because that would be unfair to the men who are already in the group. Being hostile should lead to less pleasant consequences than being cooperative does.[1]

Establishing Ground Rules

A peer support group needs rules in order to function effectively and benefit its members. Individuals who do not accept these rules cannot be allowed to stay in the group. At the very least, the following ground rules should be established:

- No physical violence or threats of violence.
- No weapons.
- No stealing.
- No use or sale of drugs or alcohol on the premises.
- No coming to meetings intoxicated or stoned.
- No hitting or abusive language toward children.

Other rules are needed to help the group achieve its goals. Issues such as sleeping during sessions, refusing to talk, refusing to stop talking, insulting group members or the group leader, smoking, cursing, and interrupting can be handled best by having the group discuss these problems and agree on specific rules with clear-cut consequences for breaking them. This approach has the following advantages:

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[1] The chapter "Enhancing Motivation" in D. H. Hepworth and J. A. Larson, *Direct Social Work Practice: Theory and Skills* (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1986), addresses approaches to gaining the cooperation of mandated program clients.

- Everyone will understand the rules, and no one can claim that the rules are unfair.
- Having accepted the rules, each member shares responsibility with the group leader for enforcing them.
- The goals of peer support include encouraging responsible behavior; it is therefore a valuable learning experience for each member to take part of the responsibility for the group's functioning.
- Because a peer support group includes many different people and ideas, a consensus approach to formulating rules will foster mutual respect and begin the process of building trust.

Reaching Agreements

Besides the established rules, agreements are needed among group members regarding the responsibilities and limits of membership. Some examples of appropriate agreements include:

What Is Said in the Group Stays in the Group. Personal experiences that a man shares with the group will not become gossip with others outside the group. (See the next section about confidentiality.)

The Group Is Nonjudgmental. Although it is OK to disagree with another member's point of view, it is not OK to put down that person.

"I" Statements Are Preferred. A statement that begins "I believe" or "I feel" is stronger and communicates more effectively than one that begins "You should" or "People say." The group should encourage "I" statements because they bring issues into the present and because they foster mutual respect and a sense of responsibility. Both the facilitator and group members will benefit by using "I" statements.

Members Have the Right to "Pass." Although everyone is encouraged to participate in each session, it is OK for a member to "pass" if he really doesn't want to share his ideas about a particular topic.

There Are No Dumb Questions. *All* questions will be addressed, so it is OK to ask any question, no matter how silly it seems. It is also OK for the facilitator to say that he or she does not know the answer but will try to find out.

Confidentiality

In counseling and self-help groups, it is usually assumed that what is said in the group is privileged information and is not communicated beyond the group. In peer support groups, confidentiality is the basis of the relationship between staff members and participants; it creates trust and respect among them. Particularly in peer support groups, participants need to be able to speak freely about personal situations so that they can come to terms with their unproductive behavior and begin to change.

Candor about confidentiality gives clients the message that staff members will treat them honestly and directly. A frank discussion about the scope and limits of confidentiality can prevent misunderstandings and put the client at ease, since he will know what to expect. Such a discussion should occur both when the participant enters the program and when the facilitator addresses the first group gathering.

Program staff should make it clear that, although confidentiality is the first and foremost principle governing their interactions with participants, there are limits to confidentiality. In certain circumstances, the nature of what a participant communicates may obligate a staff member to inform an outside party of what the man has said. Usually, such a situation arises when a participant's statements indicate that some harm has occurred or could occur to a third person, as in threats of violence against his children or the children's mother.

This discussion covers only broad principles of confidentiality and is not a guide for specific conduct in specific situations. What can and cannot be held confidential varies from state to state, so you should contact knowledgeable parties in your agency to get specific information.

To formulate agency policy regarding confidentiality, program managers and staff — including peer group facilitators — should:

- Find out what your legal responsibilities are; educate yourself.
- Review your agency's policies to see whether they comply with the law.
- Develop written policies and guidelines, and establish clinical consultation or supervision to monitor them.
- Tell clients what the policies are, and keep them informed about actions that affect your work with them.

Mandatory Reporting Laws

Child Abuse. In almost all states, anyone who knows of child abuse or neglect or has any reason to suspect it should report the abuse immediately to the appropriate agency. Many states have an 800 telephone number (a state hotline) for just that purpose.

What constitutes knowledge or suspicion of child abuse or neglect? A clear-cut example is any observed abusive behavior by an adult. Less clear are situations where a child's injuries seem suspicious or where a group member has made abusive threats.

Peer group facilitators and other staff may have to make difficult judgments about abuse. Agencies need written policies about how staff should handle indications of child abuse and should train staff as necessary. Almost all states designate certain persons as "reporters" who must disclose child abuse or be subject to legal sanctions. Learn whether your state includes your job title under its mandated reporting procedures; if so, comply fully, because penalties for failing to report child abuse are serious.

Threats Against Third Parties and Suicide Threats. Some state courts have held that mental health professionals who have knowledge that a client is contemplating suicide or doing physical harm to another person has a "duty to warn." Precisely which categories of professionals have this duty also vary from state to state. To learn whether you could be held accountable under this principle, consult your local mental health association. Because this is a new and evolving area of law, however, it may not always be clear who has the duty to warn, or what kind of warning is required, or to whom the warning should be given. The question of who should be notified will depend on the circumstances; sometimes it is the police (particularly in case of threats against a third party), but the obligation to report may also include the person who is the target of the threat. In the case of a suicide threat, family members may need to be notified.

Because no single agency is responsible for mandatory reporting laws, it may be difficult to get advice about the "duty to warn." If your agency is private or not-for-profit, talk to its lawyer and insurance agent; if you work for a public agency, consult its appropriate legal department. Suicide prevention services and hotlines might also provide helpful information and assistance with threats of suicide. And, again, you may want to check with your local mental health association.

While you review local reporting requirements, consider using a procedure whereby any staff member who hears a threat that is in any way credible should discuss it with his or her supervisor. Obviously, judgment is needed in deciding when to report. "If I don't get that ________, I'll kill myself" or "I was so mad at that ___________, I wanted to kill him" are widely used figures of speech, and you will have to decide whether they are serious threats. It is often recommended that a counselor ascertain how specific the person's plans are to carry out the threat. If the person has a specific plan and the means to carry it out (such as access to a weapon), then the threat should be considered serious. Consultation with a clinical professional is essential.

It is obvious but worth mentioning that if you "warn" someone and are wrong about the person issuing threats (that is, there is no real danger), that person will feel that his confidentiality has been violated. Reporting must be handled with care. If staff decide there is any likelihood of the threat's being carried out, they might be required to report their concerns to a senior manager. Taking appropriate action (such as calling the police or a family member) might be done only under the supervision of a senior manager except in extreme emergencies.

AIDS/HIV. Suppose that a client reveals his AIDS/HIV status (or that he has another sexually transmitted disease) to you and indicates that his partner is not aware of it. What you can do in this situation is not always clear. Laws related to AIDS/HIV confidentiality vary widely from state to state, as do those on STDs. Some states emphasize the right to privacy of the person who is infected; other states focus on the rights of the uninfected party. Because this is such a new area of law, it is vital that you check with knowledgeable professionals before formulating a policy.

For further information, contact your state health department, state bar association, state human rights commission, and/or the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Other Issues of Confidentiality, Regulations, and Law

Even when issues of confidentiality are not immediately life-threatening, they still may affect the relationships between program staff and participants. Staff need to be trained to handle issues like the following, and agencies need to develop policies about them.

Illegal Activities. What should staff members do if they discover that a client is using or selling drugs or is involved in some other illegal activity? What issues should be considered when deciding whether or not to report?

Violations of Child Support or Welfare Regulations. What is a staff member's responsibility if he or she finds out that a father in the program has a substantial unreported source of income, or has a child for whom he has not established paternity, or has another child support order — perhaps in another state — that he is not paying? Similarly, what should staff do if they discover that a custodial mother is working "off the books" and collecting AFDC; or that a father is living in a "married-like state" with a woman currently collecting AFDC?

Sharing Information. Which information should be communicated by staff — and particularly by peer group facilitators — to other staff within the agency or to supervisors and then placed in written records? What is the appropriate level of communication with the staff of other agencies cooperating with your program? Should information about a client's AIDS/HIV status, criminal activities, or relationship with the custodial parent be passed from one agency to another in order to provide integrated service to the client? How should the client's right to privacy be protected?

The handling of clients' information is usually governed by numerous state laws and regulations. In certain cases, federal regulations supersede state regulations. If you work for a government agency, the agency that provides legal counsel should be able to advise you about information-sharing regulations and reporting requirements. If you work for a nongovernment agency, you should ask the government agency with which you are contracted about confidentiality requirements that apply to your program. Seeking the advice of a private lawyer may also be necessary.

Ensuring Privacy

Staff need to be careful when sharing information with one another about clients. Although some sharing is necessary to provide effective services, program participants will object if intimate details of their lives are shared with other staff without apparent reason. A professional relationship in which staff's conversations about clients are focused on helping the clients is an important way to manage this tension. Of course, it is *never* appropriate for staff to gossip about clients or to discuss them over lunch or in any public place; nor should clients be discussed off the job with a friend or neighbor or even with members of the client's family. Program managers have an important role to play in modeling professional information-sharing behavior.

Program managers may need to develop a release form that describes which information will be communicated to the referral source (for example, the court, the child support enforcement agency, etc.) and to other agencies providing services (for example, mediation, on-the-job training, etc.). Such a form is usually signed by the client at intake and specifies who, outside the agency, will be given information and for what reasons. In some jurisdictions, release forms are mandated by state law and regulation. In other situations, it is good practice to make clear to the client precisely what will be communicated.

Depending on the situation and the jurisdiction, clients' records might be subpoenaed by the public attorney, by an attorney for a custodial parent, or directly by the judge in a child support enforcement proceeding or a child custody dispute. Given this possibility, it is important to consider what information is recorded in attendance records, counselors' notes, and progress assessments by staff, as well as what information is generally placed in clients' files.

Additionally, clients' records should be kept in a locked filing cabinet and should be read only by staff with a direct need to know. No files should be left unattended on staff members' desks.

Clinical Supervision

Although a client's threats of violence to a third party or to himself are obviously extreme problems, staff are more likely to encounter issues of substance abuse, depression, and other emotional and psychological problems that are beyond their competence to handle. This highlights the program's need for clinical supervision or clinical consultation, which can be provided by contract or agreement with a psychologist, psychiatrist, or clinical social worker; sometimes an agency satisfies this need with an experienced employee, who may or may not be "credentialed." Whether chosen from staff or outside the agency, a clinical supervisor/consultant should be readily available to provide expertise in what are often highly charged situations and to consult with staff about mental health issues that arise in working with participants.

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What to Expect in a Group

Group facilitation is the ability to manage the group process effectively and to interact with participants in a way that enhances their ability to achieve the group's objectives.

Stages of Group Development

Groups have a normal life cycle with a beginning, a middle, and an ending. They develop over time, and they behave differently during different periods in their development. Understanding where the group is in its life cycle can prevent misunderstandings and may help to explain why certain behavior is occurring.

The Beginning. At the beginning of any group, members are thinking, "Do I want to be a member of this group? Am I a member of this group? What are other people thinking about me? Will I be accepted? What are the rules?" In this early stage, group members feel confused, tense, and anxious; they depend heavily on the leader for direction and acceptance.

The facilitator's role at the beginning of the group's life cycle is to:

- Clarify the purpose of the program and group.
- Make everyone aware of the ground rules.
- Help all members feel that they belong.
- Help members learn to trust each other and the facilitator.

The facilitator must take special care from the outset. Groups start with a bang: You must learn the names of the group members, work to help members know and accept one another, and shape the group's dynamic. The facilitator is responsible for setting the tone: Is this a group in which each member's view is respected? Is everyone expected to participate? Does the group take its task seriously? *Above all else when the group is forming, learn members' names and have an agreement with each participant about why he is coming to the group.*

In the first few sessions, the group will test the facilitator as the men come to know who that person is. Session 1 of the curriculum is designed to help break the ice with a game that is a sort of test. To pass, the facilitator must show that he or she is committed to the group and to each member and that he or she seriously wants to help them.

The Middle. As time goes by, the group will settle into its routine, and trust will develop and deepen among group members and between them and the leader. Now that the group has actually formed, members are asking, "Who are the other members of the group? How do they affect me? Is everyone sticking to the ground rules? Is everyone treated equally? What do I have in common with them?"

Several dynamics develop during the middle stage of a group's life cycle:

- Members depend less on the facilitator as time goes by (making the job easier and giving more time to focus on what the men are saying). The facilitator should not try to control the group but instead should help build a secure environment and then lead the group safely and effectively through the curriculum. The men need to take ownership in the group process, in order to engage and benefit fully from the experience.

- Members are attracted to other participants who seem most like themselves, and subgroups may form on the basis of similarities. A bit later, members often look for acceptance from participants who are less like themselves as they find other commonalities.
- Members begin to challenge one another.
- As members come to trust each other, individuals often try out new things. Some will begin to dress differently; talkative members will try listening more; quiet members will begin to talk more.

The Ending. As the group nears its last sessions, more feelings will be expressed. During the group's life cycle, members have shared, trusted, reached consensus, and managed conflict; they have experienced feelings of closeness or distance, jealousy, warmth, love, hate, and/or friendship. The facilitator's role now is to help members think about the group, apply what they have learned to their own lives, say goodbye to the group leader and to each other, and begin to look toward the future.

Endings are often difficult. Members may have a lot of trouble leaving their safe haven and their new friends. They may not know how to handle this. Some regular attenders may drop out before the last sessions, because they don't know how to say goodbye or because they are upset that the group must end. Others may get angry with the facilitator, feeling that he or she is abandoning them. This is an opportunity to talk about the ending of the group and to encourage members to discuss their feelings.

Every group should mark its ending with a celebration. For many members, completing the curriculum may be an important personal accomplishment; they may want to invite their children and other family members. This is an important opportunity for members to reinforce what they have learned by summing up the experience for themselves and for others.

Risk-Taking by Group Members

Participants use the group experience to take risks that they are unable to attempt in everyday life. One form of risk-taking occurs when group members openly express their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and experiences. Trying out a new behavior or skill is another form of risk-taking. Risk-taking is difficult, because people are afraid of feeling vulnerable and of being judged, ridiculed, or disliked. Keep the following points in mind to facilitate members' risk-taking:

- Support appropriate risk-taking, such as personal sharing, that contributes to the progress of the group. After a participant has stated an honest feeling or opinion, acknowledge him in a positive way. This will encourage other members to talk honestly about their feelings and opinions.
- Minimize inappropriate risk-taking that is counterproductive to the group. For example, if a participant starts sharing something that is more appropriate for discussion with a counselor, such as sexual abuse or substance abuse, stop and ask

whether the two of you can talk *after* the session. Do this gently, so that the man does not feel silenced or rejected. You might say something like, "Thank you for taking such a big risk by sharing that. It sounds like something that is very difficult to talk about in a group. Let's talk after this session about the best way for you to share your experience with the group."

- Don't ask participants to risk more than you are willing to risk. It is difficult for anyone to take risks in front of strangers, and you should support individuals when they do so. Initially, it may be difficult for members to talk about their feelings or to admit that they lack information about a variety of topics.
- Remember that the group will move through stages of development. Risk-taking can begin after members feel safe in the group. Pay close attention to the father who takes risks early on, and try to understand the reason for this type of sharing.

As facilitator, find a balance between sharing your own thoughts and feelings and maintaining objectivity within the group. Talking about your own experiences can be part of the trust-building process, but excessive sharing by the facilitator is inappropriate and will probably intimidate participants.

Group Facilitation Techniques

Encourage Group Discussion. Ask open-ended and/or provocative questions. Encourage each member to participate in his own unique way. Listen to and understand both content and feeling, and respond to both.

Know What Is Happening in Other Program Activities. The PFS program was delivered by several agencies (the courts, the child support enforcement agency, the welfare agency, and employment agencies). If your groups are also part of a broader program, it is important to understand the various roles and requirements of the agencies involved and help participants sort them out. Working with other program staff will give you insights into what other groups are doing and how the participants relate to each other in the various components of the program. This will help make your groups more interesting and will help you aim the materials in the curriculum toward what participants are already thinking about.

Help Members Understand What Occurs Within the Group. Point out similarities and differences among members' contributions. Call the group's attention to comments that have been overlooked. Encourage members to engage in discussion with each other rather than directing their comments to you. Elicit or contribute summarizing comments about the important concepts in a specific activity or session. Remind participants of insights they may have come to in a previous session.

Attend to the Group. Maintain eye contact with *all* group members. Be aware of participants' body language, facial expressions, involvement in the program, etc. Also monitor your own nonverbal communication, to avoid unintentionally communicating disapproval or disagreement.

Pace the Program Appropriately. Move things along quickly enough to engage participants, but go slowly enough to ensure that the men are absorbing what is being discussed.

Use Humor. A sense of humor can go a long way in maintaining a group's interest. It's great to laugh at yourself or at situations, or just to have fun in whatever way is natural for you. Don't force humor, however, and *never make a joke at a group member's expense*.

Be Yourself. Allow your own personality to emerge as you lead the group. The more you come across as an authentic human being with emotions, a sense of humor, strengths, and weaknesses, the more that participants will want to relate to you.

Know Your Limitations. It's OK not to know everything. Be aware of your knowledge gaps, as well as your vulnerable issues, and know when to refer participants to other resources.

Take Care of Yourself. The facilitator often will get very close to the group members, but it is important, as a professional, to keep enough distance to remain objective. Feel free not to answer personal questions, especially sexual questions. You and the participants *both* have a right to privacy. Nonetheless, you are an important model for the men. They will want to know how you handle situations and resolve issues. Share as much about yourself as is comfortable, but remember not to share your own experiences just to meet your own needs.

Using Curriculum Activities Effectively

Many activities in this curriculum are best conducted in a five-step sequence:

1. **Bridge.** Connect the new activity to the one that preceded it, so that group experiences follow logical order.
2. **Introduce.** Explain the purpose of each activity so that participants can benefit fully from it.
3. **Be Clear.** Give clear instructions about the activity. Plan how to divide participants into small groups and exactly what the groups will do. Give detailed instructions before participants begin to form the groups, so that the instructions can be heard. Reinforce verbal instructions by writing and posting them in front of the room.
4. **Process.** Help participants examine what occurred during the activity so that they can learn from it. Have them react to both the content and the interaction that took place during each activity. Draw connections between the participants' group experiences and their life experiences outside the group.
5. **Summarize.** Highlight the important points that advance the objectives of the activity. Restate the key concepts underlying the activity.

Tips in Facilitating Peer Support Groups

Ethnic Awareness

Much group discussion will reflect participants' various cultural influences. Learn about the fathers' different cultural heritages, and understand the critical role their backgrounds play in transmitting values. Friction may arise between a participant's ethnic traditions and mainstream American culture, and the fathers' expectations may vary depending on their traditions. Attitudes about birth control, work, and fathering are likely to conflict among participants, and the viewpoints of older men may be at odds with those of younger men. The facilitator needs to provide constructive guidance (without imposing value judgments) to help individuals and the whole group come to terms with such conflicts. If the participants are ethnically diverse, they are likely to hold stereotypical views of one another; stereotypes will have to be discussed in order for the group members to support each other.

To be responsive to ethnic and cultural differences among participants, the leader should:

- Be aware and develop an understanding of the men's diverse backgrounds.
- Consult knowledgeable professionals about ethnic differences; seek additional information, and get feedback from the men themselves.
- Respect the reluctance or unwillingness of some ethnic groups to discuss topics that they consider private. Do not push individuals to participate without considering that their backgrounds may make them reticent.
- Be sensitive to individual abilities to handle English, both written and spoken.
- Avoid stereotypes. Stereotyping denies individuality and does not take into account the diversity within a group. For example:

  The word *Hispanic* means neither an ethnic group nor a race. It includes people from many locations, including Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spain, and South and Central America — all of which have different cultures and many races. Not all Hispanics (or those with Spanish surnames) speak Spanish, are Catholic, or come from large families.

  Asians include Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Mien, Lao, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Indians, and many other groups — again, all distinct in cultural traditions and languages.

  African-Americans come from all regions of the United States and have diverse religious and cultural traditions. The word *blacks* includes both African-Americans and many populations from outside the United States, including Africans, West Africans, Caribbean peoples, and Latinos.

- In being sensitive to the dangers of stereotyping, avoid treating any participant differently on the basis of culture; that may be interpreted by others as preferential treatment.

- Make an effort to provide role models who represent the variety of ethnic backgrounds in the group in order to increase the fathers' self-esteem by giving them a greater sense of their own potential.

The Length of Sessions

The length of time given to PFS peer support sessions varied across sites and from group to group. A group of eight can complete two exercises in an hour, while a group of 15 may have trouble completing them in two hours. Group dynamics vary as well: Some groups take two hours for every session, while others complete the same activities in half an hour, with time to spare.

If a group does take off and is animated during every exercise, it is probably a good idea to move on to the next activity in 45 minutes, covering two activities in each session. A group that works well together will express what needs to be said in the next activity or in the "Feedback/Wrap-up" at the end of the session. The group will be further stimulated and enriched by the additional material.

Groups that last longer than 90 minutes need to break for a stretch, a trip to the bathroom, or a cigarette. A break can be seen as part of the group activity, because members use it to get to know one another. But the break is not a break for the facilitator, who can use that time to seek out quiet members and learn how they are doing or can chat with subgroups to get to know the men informally. A facilitator *should not* use this time to do paperwork, make a phone call, or talk with other staff (except when it directly relates to the group's work).

"Feedback/Wrap-up" Activities

The last 10 to 15 minutes of each session are set aside for "Feedback/Wrap-up." During this time, every member of the group should be encouraged to talk. This gives each man a chance to sum up his experience and to think about what has just happened in the group. It also gives each man a chance to air any negative feelings, so that the session doesn't end with his feeling that no one listened to his concerns. Feedback helps each man to feel that he matters to the group.

"Feedback/Wrap-up" also gives the facilitator an opportunity to take the pulse of the group as a whole and to listen to its members individually. Hearing the men's reactions to the session, the leader can see whether the activities worked as planned, which parts didn't work, and which parts worked much better than he or she imagined. This information equips the leader to plan the next session; more important, it gives the opportunity to consider how each member is doing. For instance, if someone has been quiet throughout the session, was he listening and fully involved, was something bothering him, or was he daydreaming and not really participating? "Feedback/Wrap-up" helps the facilitator to interpret such behavior and to uncover problems.

Adding New Members to an Existing Group

During the course of sessions, new members may be added to the group. This can either disrupt the group or be used as an opportunity. A great first step is to have a one-on-one meeting with the new member as you did with all members before the group started.

When a new man joins the group, spend the first half hour of that session introducing him. Go around the room and ask each member to introduce himself. State the topic of the last session, and ask the original members to tell the newcomer what they learned about it; this reinforces the material for the original members. Alternatively, have each man talk about what the group means to him and why he continues to participate. This is also a good opportunity for the facilitator to review the group's goals and ground rules.

Consider asking one of the established members to become a kind of sponsor for the new member. The sponsor's job would be to summarize what the group has talked about, to explain things the new member may not understand, and generally to support the new man as he begins to participate in the group. Being a sponsor is a growth opportunity for the established member, because the best way to learn is to explain material to someone else.

Coping with Members Who Attend Irregularly

Members who often miss sessions present three problems. In PFS, the first concerned what to do about the person's future participation in the program. Each site had to address this issue by developing a policy that clearly stated the consequences of missing a session. The next two problems, however, affect the whole group: how to reinvolve someone who has missed sessions and is returning to the group and what the facilitator should do when several members are absent.

When a member has missed one or several sessions, the facilitator may want to have a one-on-one meeting with him before reintroducing him to the group — especially if he has missed the sessions because he was not cooperating with the program. However, a one-on-one meeting might be helpful even if the member missed sessions because of illness or some other unavoidable cause. When the individual is reintroduced to the group, the facilitator might use the "What's New?" segment of the session to ask other members to summarize the last session. This is a useful review for all members, as well an opportunity for the absent member to catch up. It may also be useful to have the absent member explain to the group why he has been away, in order to help him take responsibility for his actions and to prevent speculation among other members.

When a substantial number of members are absent, the group's character will change. If the facilitator knows in advance that a large number will not be attending, he or she may want to plan an alternative activity and not continue with the curriculum sequence. But sometimes the facilitator won't know until the last minute that a large segment of the group is absent and that there are not enough members to conduct the planned activities. It is important not to "punish" those who did attend by slowing them down. Consider using a discussion format to cover planned material, and then schedule a make-up session for the men who did not attend. In the interest of fairness, members who miss sessions should be asked to make up the related activities.

Absenteeism signals that the facilitator needs to examine the group's structure. Providing an effective peer support may mean having to evaluate what's working and what needs to be changed. Is the group meeting in the right place at the right time? Is the curriculum engaging the participants? Is the facilitator's style effective, or should it be adapted more to the group's needs?

Managing Behavior Problems in a Group

No matter how experienced the facilitator is, at times the group will be distracted by individual members. After looking at general guidelines for avoiding behavior problems, we will examine some common problems and how to handle them.

General Guidelines

- Listen carefully to what the group members are saying; behavior problems are often problems of communication.
- Define the group's rules and expectations early.
- Involve participants in developing the rules — and the consequences for breaking them.
- Apply the consequences for breaking rules consistently and fairly.
- Develop a personal relationship with each participant. Besides the one-on-one interviews with each participant before the program begins, consider asking individuals to meet with you as the need arises.
- Give participants compliments and words of support.

Common Behavior Problems

Most groups display certain typical roles. There is usually a clown, for instance, and someone who is always willing to talk, and someone who tends to make trouble. Roles that help or hinder the group in accomplishing its goal are called *task roles*; roles that help or hinder the group in its work as a unit are called *social roles*. Both types of roles can be either positive or negative influences on a group. But certain types of problems almost always emerge, as discussed below.

The Monopolizer. The monopolizer talks too much. Sometimes he is knowledgeable, and it is tempting to let him take over. This is never a good idea. The monopolizer is likely to say inappropriate things to other members and to distract the group from its task. He also can cause resentment among other members. The facilitator should feel authorized to interrupt a monopolizer; to talk with him privately, away from the group; or, as leader, to ask the group to help address the problem. Sometimes it helps to avoid making eye contact with the monopolizer. If he is well intentioned, acknowledge his contribution but remind him that others need to contribute as well. The facilitator is the group leader and should not let anyone else play this role.

The Silent Member. The silent member may be shy, may fear being "wrong" in front of the group, or may simply be a quiet learner. If he is not making eye contact, it is difficult to know whether he is paying attention. (Remember that some members are quiet because of their cultural backgrounds.) Strategies for involving a silent member include calling on him by name but allowing him to pass if he seems uncomfortable, chatting with him informally after the session or during breaks to see how things are going, checking with other staff about his behavior in other activities, and pairing him with more talkative people during an activity. Reinforce any responses (verbal or otherwise) that a silent member makes, and watch for any nonverbal cues indicating that he would like to comment.

The Entertainer (Class Clown). Some group members always have to be on stage. The class clown may be amusing, but he will disrupt the group's work. Here are some suggestions:

- Stand close to the entertainer (class clown).
- Give him some extra responsibility so that his energy can be used in a positive rather than negative way.
- Recognize that, if the clowning is not disruptive, it can serve a useful function by helping the group release pent-up energy or anxiety.

Side Conversations. Side conversations are frustrating for the facilitator. They occur because close friends sit together, or something interesting but not related to the activity has happened, or members are not interested in the topic, or the topic is *so* interesting that members cannot wait their turn to speak. Here are some strategies for handling side conversations:

- Make a statement like the following to the entire group: "I'm hearing a lot of different conversations going on at one time. That makes it hard for us to communicate. Please talk to the whole group when you have something to say."
- Pause during the side conversation, allowing the entire group to hear it.
- Draw the talkers into the group's discussion by asking their opinions or giving them other tasks to perform.
- Give the group a short break, openly acknowledging that some members need to complete their business.
- Approach the talkers during a break to find out why they are having side conversations and to ask for their cooperation in the future.
- Change the activity or the makeup of subgroups to renew the men's interest and get a fresh start.

Verbal Abuse. Treat verbal abuse as a form of violence. Stop the abuser immediately, and apply the consequences for breaking this rule. No facilitator ever has to accept verbal abuse, and certainly no member of the group should be subjected to it by another member. Call for a cooling down period in which both the abuser and the abused person can take a break before trying to work things out. If the situation is very tense, you may have to call on a mediator for help.

Personality Conflicts. It would be unusual for any group leader to like all the members of the group equally. In fact, a participant may try to avoid his responsibility by creating a personality conflict with the facilitator. But if you have an initial agreement about the purpose of the group, you can overcome some of this by saying, "Even though we are not compatible, we can still work together for the sake of your child." The group itself also can be used to help in situations involving personality conflicts. Conflict is a normal part of life, and working out conflicts in the group can help each participant learn about conflict resolution.

If the personality conflict becomes a serious problem, the facilitator's supervisor (or someone else in authority) can arbitrate the dispute. This may mean only that the supervisor backs the facilitator and confirms his or her position. Again, however, the conflict can be an important opportunity, if the situation is handled carefully. Rather than being treated as simply an administrative matter, resolving the dispute can be part of the process through which the father comes to terms with responsibility. Even though the arbitrator/supervisor will support the facilitator, the informal hearing may assist the man in taking responsibility and may allow him to return to the peer support group feeling that he has been taken seriously.

Development of Subgroups. Two or more individuals often develop a subgroup on the basis of common roles, beliefs, attitudes, emotional responses, or likes and dislikes; subgroups also tend to form on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, age, and so on. Subgroups can provide support and protection for individuals within the larger group, particularly for members who hold less prominent positions. People in subgroups often communicate differently than in the larger group, whether they are discussing a specific topic or information about other members. For example, young people in subgroups may be more honest with one another, expressing opinions or feelings that they don't feel comfortable stating in the larger group. The facilitator should reach out to subgroups and get to know each member. It is unrealistic to discourage such natural groupings, and it may be possible, little by little, to help subgroup members participate in the larger group.

Polarization. *Polarization* is the pulling away of individuals or subgroups from one another and from the larger group's purpose of helping them be supportive, providing fathers. Sometimes people pull away when they perceive that what they believe in has been discounted or denounced. Other times, two or more individuals or subgroups actively disagree, become angry with each other, and fail to resolve their conflict. In most cases it is easy to notice polarization dynamics: Members may move away from the group, may sit outside the group arrangement, or may not participate constructively in the work of the group. If polarization occurs, you might:

- Do nothing, except observe and personally acknowledge that polarization may be taking place. This approach is especially appropriate if the polarized member is a young man who is trying to get attention. Alternatively, try to find a different, more positive way to give him attention.
- Handle put-downs and disagreements appropriately when they occur, to help prevent polarization.
- Encourage polarized members to rejoin the group.
- Stop the work of the group, and provide an opportunity for members to talk about how they are feeling.
- Speak individually with members who may be feeling polarized, before or after the group meeting.

Session **1**

Introduction to Responsible Fatherhood

Activity **1-1**	**Overview of the Program**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
	Icebreaker	
Activity **1-2**	**What We Have in Common**	
	or	
Activity **1-3**	**People Hunt**	
	or	
Activity **1-4**	**Name Game**	☞ **30-40 minutes**
Activity **1-5**	**What Can I Expect from Peer Support?**	☞ **40-50 minutes**
	and	
Activity **1-6**	**What Can Peer Support Expect from Me?**	
Activity **1-7**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Key Concepts

- This program is designed to help the participants look at themselves as men and as fathers.
- It aims to further develop the skills that participants need to be successful fathers.
- It is intended to help the participants negotiate relationships with partners, children, family members, friends, employers, and the court system.
- The program will be interesting and practical. The fathers will help decide what is dealt with in the sessions. They will also be asked to apply what they are learning in their daily lives.
- There are ground rules to be followed during the sessions that will allow the men to get the most out of the peer support experience.
- The experiences that the participants have had up to this point in their lives affect how they see themselves as men and as fathers. Many of the men share similar experiences, but all of them have had experiences in their families, relationships, schools, and communities that are *unique*. These sessions will provide an opportunity for them to discuss their experiences and work out solutions to problems together.
- The focus of this program is *peer support*. The more the men are willing to share their experiences with others, the more they will get out of this program.

Materials Checklist

Activity 1-2 What We Have in Common

☐ Handouts, "What We Have in Common" and "Pick a Card"
☐ Pencils (for everyone)

Activity 1-3 People Hunt

☐ Index cards (for everyone)
☐ Pencils (for everyone)

Activity 1-5 What Can I Expect from Peer Support?

☐ Handout, "Main Session Topics"
☐ Pencils (for everyone)
☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Activity 1-6 What Can Peer Support Expect from Me?

☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Introduction to the Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum

The *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* is designed to help fathers support their children and be better fathers. The activities in the curriculum will promote decision making, thoughtful discussion, communication, and relationship building. This first session of the curriculum is crucial to the support group's long-term success, because its ideas and principles must be clearly communicated to the participants.

The way in which the facilitator communicates "sets the tone" for how members are to interact. It is important for the facilitator to make contact with *each* group member and to learn everyone's name. The facilitator also should assist members in learning each other's names.

In the first session of any group, members will "test" the facilitator, as well as feel each other out. For example, fathers might be thinking: Can I relate to this person? Can he or she handle my acting out? What are the boundaries here? Are these other guys like me, or am I the only one who isn't sure about this? Does anyone else here have the same problems with their kids or with their woman as I'm having? The better the facilitator demonstrates in this first session that he or she can handle anxiety, the more he or she communicates to the men that this is a place of safety where something can be gained by participation.

Part of feeling safe is knowing where you stand and what's expected of you. For this reason, the basic ground rules of the group need to be stated clearly, emphasizing that they are mandatory for everyone. Group members must discuss and agree on the rules together. Specific consequences for breaking the rules must be spelled out, such as suspension or expulsion and what results from these actions.

At a minimum, ground rules should include:

- No fighting or threats of violence.
- No hitting or abusive language toward any children who might be present.
- No weapons.
- No attending the group under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- No drug or alcohol use or selling on the premises.
- No stealing.

Bonding — or a feeling of belonging or "connectedness" — is vital to the group's success, and Session 1 should be designed to *begin* the bonding process. A good way to start is to create *real* ways by which participants can accept ownership of the group. You could ask members to name the group; ask for their ideas about topics to cover; set rules together about smoking (for example, establish a smoking break); if possible, offer them choices about *when* the group will meet; decide on how and when new members can join the group; and, above all, be clear about *how* the issue of confidentiality will be handled both by members and by the facilitator.

Every session should promote the sharing of ideas, opinions, and feelings as well as provide new factual information; that is, each session should offer a *balance between doing and reflecting*. For instance, after each activity, be sure to have a discussion that highlights the key ideas you want to get across. Limit the amount of new information, to be sure that people have grasped the most important concepts.

Finally, the group should give the participants a sense of *hope, anticipation,* and *expectation*. If they leave Session 1 with some of these feelings (or even with an inkling of them), they are more likely to attend the next session. Wrapping up or concluding the work of each session is one way to give members an opportunity to articulate what they have gotten out of it — as well as what they didn't get and what they hope to get at the next or subsequent sessions.

Each session in the *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* lasts anywhere from 90 to 120 minutes and includes a number of activities that take from 10 to 60 minutes. Time ranges will vary depending on the number of participants, the activity, the extent to which participants have personal experience with the topic addressed, the amount of time spent on discussing each activity, and the overall "personality" of the group. When planning activities, keep in mind the amount of time the group will meet, and allow at least 15 minutes to wrap up the session and exchange feedback about it. *Never start a new activity unless there is enough time to complete it.* Depending on the length of time set aside for your group, you may want to divide each session into two meetings. If so, always start each meeting with the "What's New?" activity, and close with the "Feedback/Wrap-up" activity. Although a time estimate is provided for each activity, experience has shown that activities often take longer than the estimate. As you become familiar with your group and with the activities in the curriculum, you will become adept at assessing how much time an activity is likely to take.

Overview of the Program

Purpose: To provide basic information to the group about the purpose of and schedule for the peer support group.

Materials: None.

Time: 10-15 minutes.

Planning Note: Choose one of the icebreakers — “What We Have in Common,” the “Name Game,” or “People Hunt” — based on what you know about the group members. For example, if you know that some members have difficulty writing, do not use “What We Have in Common” or “People Hunt”; instead, choose the “Name Game.” If you think the participants would be more comfortable with straightforward introductions, don’t use any of the icebreakers; simply ask each participant to introduce himself, stating his name, the names and ages of his children, how often he sees his children, and what it has been like for him to be a father. Meet with each father individually before Session 1, to establish rapport and get to know him as an individual. You can use these meetings to educate the men about the group process, including what they can expect from peer support. Individual meetings can also help you to assess each father’s ability to benefit from the group experience — and to determine who might not fit into or benefit from the group.

Procedure: As facilitator, you should introduce yourself to the participants and, in your own words, welcome them to the program and explain what you hope to accomplish together. You might list such goals as the following — in your own words — on a chalkboard or newsprint:

The overall goal of this peer support group is to assist you in your ability to support your children, both financially and emotionally. We believe that fathers can benefit from talking with other men about things that are important to them.

Therefore:

- The group will offer you a chance to talk about your lives as men and fathers.
- It will help you to learn about your child's development so that you can handle everyday situations that come up in parenting.
- It will assist you in your relationships with the mother of your children and with others who are involved with them (such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, etc.).
- It will show you ways to improve your skills in problem solving, decision making, and dealing with conflicts. The techniques we will discuss have helped others to better manage their lives, plan for the future, and achieve their goals.

Next, explain the schedule for group meetings. Tell the men when the group will meet, how long each session will last, and how many sessions they are expected to attend. When you are sure that the participants understand these points, ask whether they have any comments or reactions to the schedule. Also ask if anyone wants to talk about something that wasn't mentioned.

Next, say something like, "We will have a chance to get to know each other by doing something that is called an 'icebreaker,' or a way to get people talking and communicating." Then begin *one* of the following icebreaker activities.

What We Have in Common

Purpose: To get group members talking to each other. To establish the idea that they share things as fathers and men. To identify topics that will be addressed in future sessions.

Materials: Handout, "What We Have in Common"; pencils (for everyone).

Time: 30-40 minutes.

Planning Note: In conducting this activity, use the handout "What We Have in Common" or use the blank circle following the handout and write four of the suggested questions (or make up questions of your own). If you are using four of the suggested questions, write one question in each of the four parts of the circle; then make enough copies of your handout for every participant. If you prefer to focus on one question at a time, see the sample index card on page 1-13.

Procedure: Explain to the men that this activity will get them moving around the room and talking with each other, to see whether they have things in common.

Give the handout "What We Have in Common" to each member. Read aloud the questions in each of the four parts of the circle. Tell members to answer all four questions and then to get up, walk around the room, introduce themselves, and ask others what they wrote in the blanks. When they find someone who made similar responses, they should sign or initial each other's part of the circle.

When everyone has had the opportunity to talk with his fellow members, the men should all take a seat while you lead a discussion of the activity by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

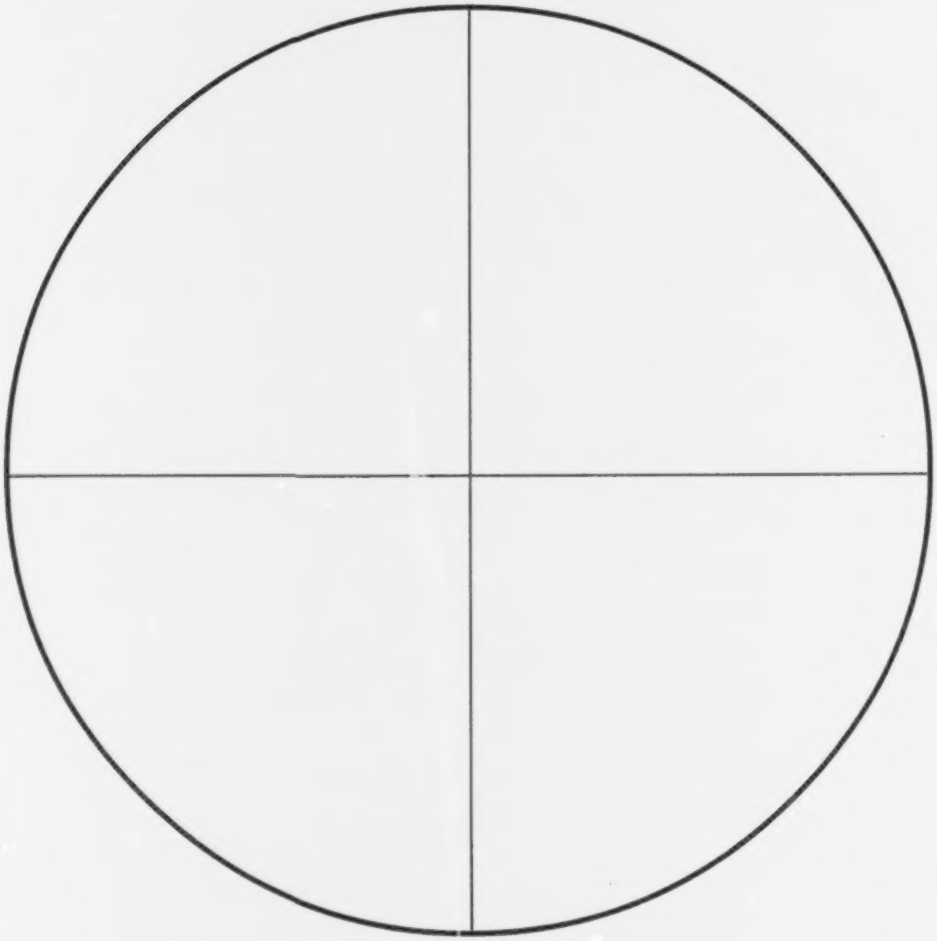
1. How did it feel to meet someone this way, that is, by comparing your responses with theirs?
2. Did you find people who had similar responses?
3. Are there any major differences in your responses? If so, what are they?
4. What are some of the things that you would like to get out of this program?
5. What are some of the things that you need help with in dealing with your children?
6. What did you learn from doing this activity?

What We Have in Common

Suggested Questions

1. Name one thing about being a father that you feel good about.
2. What is your favorite way to unwind after a long day?
3. What is the hardest thing for you to handle as a parent that you would like help with?
4. What is one thing that you would like to gain from this program?
5. How did you hear about this program?
6. Where do you live?
7. How long do you expect it will take you to complete this program?
8. What would you like to accomplish in this program?
9. What kind of job would you like to have?
10. What kind of work have you done in the past?
11. What's the most important thing to you in your life right now?
12. If you were not in this program right now, what would you be doing?
13. If your children were here, what would they tell us about you?
14. Which three people would you pick to share an island with?
15. Give one word to describe each of your children.
16. Which person in your life is closest to you?
17. What words would this person use to describe you?

What We Have in Common



Pick a Card

Write each of the questions from the handout "What We Have in Common" on an index card. Pass the stack of cards around and ask each of the participants to pick one card from the pack and answer the question. Tell the participants that they have a right to pass (in which case they can pick another card or can tell something about themselves that they'd like the group to know). In addition, after each person answers the question on his card, he should choose another person from the group and ask him to respond to the same question.

Sample 3" x 5" card:

What is your favorite way to
unwind after a long day?

People Hunt

Purpose: To get members talking with each other. To give participants an opportunity to share personal things about themselves with people they do not know well.

Materials: Index cards, pencils (for everyone).

Time: 30-40 minutes.

Procedure: Explain to the men that this activity will get them moving around the room and talking with each other.

Give a blank index card and pencil to all participants. Instruct them to write three things about themselves that they are comfortable sharing with other members (such as favorite foods, music, number of children, etc.). Remind them that they should *not* write anything on the card that feels too revealing or personal. Also, they are *not* to put their names on their cards.

When each participant has completed his card, collect all the cards, and shuffle and redistribute them, making sure that no one gets his own card.

When everyone has a card belonging to someone else, instruct the members to get up, walk around the room, and "interview" all the other members until they find the owner of the card they are holding. Each man should continue standing until his card has been returned to him.

When everyone is holding his own card, the men should take a seat. Now lead a discussion about the activity using the discussion questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How did it feel to search for the owner of the card you were holding?
2. What "clues" or statements led you to the owner of the card? (For example, did the card's owner write something about himself that made him easy to identify? If so, what gave him away?)
3. What was it like to write three things about yourself that you could be identified by?
4. What did you learn about other members from this activity? What did you learn about yourself?

Name Game

Purpose: To give the fathers a chance to learn each other's names, as well as something about each other. To start the process of group "bonding" by building rapport.

Materials: None.

Time: 30-40 minutes.

Planning Note: The "Name Game" is a fun icebreaker that gives each participant something to say to relieve the tension and anxiety that are always present when a new group begins. It also "tests" whether the facilitator can remember everyone's name. If the facilitator can remember all the information about the men, it shows that he or she is paying attention and is a good listener. If the facilitator has trouble and asks for help, it shows that he or she is sincere and human, since the facilitator can acknowledge the need for help. The facilitator is modeling for the participants a way of communicating with others in the group. Thus, if the facilitator is being tested by the group members, it is important to avoid becoming defensive if he or she cannot complete the exercise. By going last, the facilitator shows a willingness to take risks, thereby paving the way for others to do the same. The facilitator should not attempt to get out of going last, particularly since this is the first opportunity to demonstrate to the group members that he or she is a willing part of the "team."

Procedure: The group members sit in a circle. One member (let's call him Raheem) is instructed to say the following three things about himself:

- His name.
- The number of children he has.
- One word to describe what it means to be a father.

The person to the right of Raheem (let's call him Dave) has to repeat Raheem's name, number of children, and the word Raheem used to describe how he feels about being a father. Then, Dave must give the same information about himself. The person to the right of Dave then repeats both Raheem's and Dave's information and then answers the three questions for himself. This pattern proceeds around the circle: Each participant repeats the names, the number of children, and the meaning of being a father for all members. The facilitator is the last person to go, and he or she has to repeat the information given by everyone in the group. After your turn, use the following questions to discuss the activity.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How did it feel to talk in front of a new group?
2. How hard was it to remember people's names and information?
3. What kinds of words did people use to describe what it means to be a father?

Post a list of the words the fathers give so that everyone can see it. Then use the list to establish a sense of shared feelings and commonalities and as a reference for reasons why peer support can be helpful. For example, if several men say "left out" to describe what it means to be a father, then you can suggest that this is often how noncustodial fathers feel about their relationship to their children, while stating that the peer support group will offer all of them an opportunity to share ideas about how to change or improve this relationship.

What Can I Expect from Peer Support?

Purpose: To help the fathers to develop a sense of ownership of the support group by getting their reactions to the topics planned for discussion and by finding out what other topics they want to discuss.

Materials: Handout, "Main Session Topics"; pencils (for everyone); newsprint and marker.

Time: 20-25 minutes.

Planning Note: This activity gives participants an opportunity to have input into the topics selected for discussion. The men will be asked what they think about the existing topics and if there is anything else they would like to discuss. The handout "Main Session Topics" provides a brief description of each of the sessions in the curriculum. It is important to explain to the fathers how the curriculum is structured. The first group of sessions (Sessions 1 through 4) focus on personal development; Sessions 5 through 9 focus on issues related to the needs of the men's children and to them as fathers; Sessions 10 and 11 focus on relationship issues; Sessions 12 through 14 deal with handling conflict and anger and getting along on the job; and so on. Also explain that the topics overlap among sessions.

As the men are reacting to the session topics, help them understand how each topic relates to their lives. Ask them what they think about each topic and what experiences they have had with it. If someone has a strong reaction to a particular topic and seems to want to talk about his reaction to it (for example, the issue of child support), you may need to spend time letting the men express their feelings. Often, letting people vent their feelings will help them move on to other issues. If the men can't seem to move on, however, tell them that you will change the order of the sessions so that they can deal with this issue early in the program. Take notes about what they say so that, in planning a particular session, you can incorporate their questions, concerns, and experiences into the agenda. (For example, you may want to create new case scenarios or revise role plays to reflect situations the men have presented to the group.)

If there is a session topic that the men do not want to discuss, spend some time exploring why they feel this way. Perhaps some group members have had negative experiences with a topic and are resistant to talking about it. Or they may not be comfortable with each other and may feel that some things are too personal to talk about in a group. In this case, ask them under what circumstances they think this issue could be raised in discussion, and suggest to them that you will bring it up for discussion after they have gotten to get to know each other. If the men suggest topics that are not in the Responsible Fatherhood curriculum, ask the entire group how important this topic is to them, and tell them that you will arrange for a time to address it. Assure the men that you value their opinions and that you invite their suggestions, comments, and reactions at any point throughout the sessions.

Procedure: Write the major session topics on newsprint in advance. Plan to keep this newsprint — and your notes about the discussion — to help you prioritize and order the curriculum for your group.

Now that the men have relaxed a little, tell them that you want to talk about the topics that will be covered in the upcoming sessions. Distribute the handout "Main Session Topics," and ask each father to select the three topics that seem most important to him. Use the marker to put checks beside these topics. Then ask them to add other topics or situations that they want to discuss. If a father starts to talk about a personal situation that fits in with a topic on your list (for example, "I want to talk about how to get my baby's mother to let me see my child more often"), explain to him that his situation will come up often in several sessions, such as those about relationships, being a part-time father, negotiating support, and conflict management. To generate a discussion about the session topics, use the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. In general, what are your reactions to the topics we have proposed for the peer support group?
2. Which topics seemed most important to most of you? Why?
3. Which topics seemed least important? Why?
4. What additional topics do you want to include in our list?

Remind participants that their presence is important. "Peer support" means talking with each other and helping each other out; what each man puts into the group will determine what he gets out of it. Let the men know that you will check with them each week to make sure that the group is useful to them. Tell them they should never hesitate to let you and their peers know when they want to deal with something in the group.

Main Session Topics

⇨ What Are My Values?

How do I feel about myself? What do I believe in? What values do I live my life by? How do I communicate these values to my children?

⇨ Boys to Men: Experiencing Manhood

What is a man? What does it mean to be a man in today's world? How have my past experiences shaped my view of myself?

⇨ The Art of Communication

What is communication? How do I communicate my needs, wants, and feelings to people who are important to me? What goes wrong in communication? How can I improve the way I communicate with others, verbally as well as nonverbally? How can I improve the ways in which I communicate with my children?

⇨ Fathers as Providers

What does it mean to be a successful father? What qualities would a "Father of the Year" possess? What does it mean to be a provider for one's children? What gets in the way of a noncustodial father's efforts to be a provider for his children?

⇨ Noncustodial Fathers: Rights and Responsibilities

What reasons do some fathers give for not paying child support? How will establishing paternity and paying child support help me and my children? What are the disadvantages to me and my children if I do not establish paternity? What are my rights and responsibilities as a noncustodial father?

⇨ Developing Values in Children

What are my roles and responsibilities as a father? What characteristics do I value in my children? How can I positively communicate and strengthen the development of these values in the lives of my children? How can I best influence my children's moral development?

(Continued on page 22)

HANDOUT

Session **1**
Activity **5**

Coping as a Single Father

What are the struggles when fathers do it alone or when they have part-time child care responsibilities? What tasks and responsibilities are expected of parents in raising their children? How do you handle your children's daily needs when you are in charge? What are some free or inexpensive ways to spend quality time with your children?

Dealing with Children's Behaviors

How does the way my parents raised me influence the way I treat my children? What are some effective ways of managing children's difficult behavior without hitting or yelling? How can I discipline my children in ways that help them feel good about themselves?

Relationships: Being a Friend, Partner, Parent, and Employee

How can I be what I must be for everyone who needs me? How can I get my needs met? How can I communicate effectively with all these different people?

Understanding Male-Female Relationships

What are the things that make relationships work? What gets in the way? How can I best communicate to my partner the things that are important to me? What do I value in a partner? How well do I know my partner? What do women want in relationships?

Managing Conflict and Handling Anger

We all get angry, yet sometimes our anger gets out of hand and backfires. How can we find outlets for our anger and manage life's conflicts without hurting ourselves or anyone else?

Handling Anger and Conflict on the Job

To keep their jobs, people need to know how to get along with supervisors, coworkers, and customers. How do we do this if we feel disrespected? How do we manage anger and conflict in the workplace so that we don't have to quit or be fired?

(Continued on page 23)

HANDOUT

Session 1
Activity 5

Surviving on the Job

How do I get what I want from work? How do I know what my employer expects of me?

The Issue of Race/Racism

When racism affects everybody in all areas of life, how can people of color resist its power to destroy self-confidence? How can children be taught to be proud and to believe in themselves?

Taking Care of Business

What does it mean to be "self-sufficient"? How can I take care of my own and take care of myself?

Managing Your Time and Money

How can I manage my time and money? How can I fulfill all my financial responsibilities for myself and my family? How can I "make ends meet" and juggle all my responsibilities?

Building a Support Network: Who's on Your Side?

All parents need help in caring for their children. How can you figure out who's there for you, and how can you best gain his or her support? Dealing with your child's mother and family sometimes requires special skills. How can you work out a relationship with them that leaves your child out of the middle?

Alcohol and Drug Use and Abuse

How do I know if I have a problem with alcohol or drugs? How can I help myself if I do have a problem? How can I help someone close to me who has a problem? How can I avoid becoming a substance abuser?

Healthful Eating

All parents and children should learn how to care for themselves by eating well, exercising, and getting plenty of rest. This session offers information about good health and nutrition.

What Can Peer Support Expect from Me?

Purpose: To establish clear expectations about the behaviors required of group members.

Materials: Newsprint and marker.

Time: 20-25 minutes.

Planning Note: Some facilitators may want to establish ground rules for the behaviors required of group members in Session 1. Other facilitators may prefer to begin peer support by establishing a more "friendly" rapport with the group.

Regardless of which activity you begin with, it is important for group members to understand what is expected of them — and the consequences of not meeting expectations. You could state the ground rules in Session 1 and reiterate them whenever a new member joins the group.

Procedure: After you have gotten members' ideas about session topics (Activity 1-5), go over the basic expectations that the program has of the fathers. This should be done as a group, even though certain things (such as ground rules and attendance) may not be negotiable. If a rule is required by some agency, be clear and honest about this and the consequences for not adhering to the rule. Your discussion should include the following:

- Ground rules (the minimum rules are listed in the introduction to this session, on page 1-5).
- Attendance requirements (what happens when members miss sessions or arrive late).
- What is considered confidential and how confidentiality will be handled.
- How peer support works (for example, explain that this group will be most effective if everyone participates; it is not like a classroom, where the instructor lectures).
- How members are expected to treat each other (ask the fathers how they would define disrespectful behavior).
- Which behaviors are OK and which are not OK (cover such things as being late, sleeping, eating, and smoking).

Ask the fathers if they want to add any other rule or operating principle to this list.

After a consensus has been reached about rules and operating principles, write these down on newsprint, and post them somewhere in the room where everyone can see them at all times. Avoid language that is negative or harsh, and limit the number of rules so that the ones you and group members agree to can be maintained.

Feedback/Wrap-up

Purpose: To give group members an opportunity to express what they thought about the session. To recap main points. To set up the agenda or expectations for the next session. To provide closure for the session.

Materials: None.

Time: 10-15 minutes.

Procedure: End the session by asking each member to comment on what he thought about the group experience and how he is feeling at the moment. Ask each of them to state, if he can, one thing about today's session that would convince him to come back next time. When everyone has shared his reactions, tell the group what you got out of the experience, by summarizing some of the key points raised during the session. This is an opportunity to review your agenda and see whether you covered everything, and it lets you discuss your plans for the next session. Clearly say when the group will meet next, and thank everyone for participating.

What Are My Values?

Activity **2-1**	**What's New?**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **2-2**	**Your Goals and Values** **or**	
Activity **2-3**	**Family Tree**	☞ **35-45 minutes**
Activity **2-4**	**Values Voting**	☞ **35-45 minutes**
Activity **2-5**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Key Concepts

- *Values* are principles or beliefs that people hold about things that really matter to them. Values reflect what a person thinks is right or wrong in a given situation.
- What people value has a lot to do with how they were raised and with what was important to others close to them as they grew up. Remembering where values come from can help us evaluate our behavior. After reflecting on whether our behavior expresses our values, we can explore ways to adapt or change things that are not in accordance with our values.
- A man's values influence all his decisions, including his choice of friends, how he spends his leisure time, and how he develops career goals.
- People who act according to their values are more likely to feel comfortable with what they do.
- Parents who act according to their values are more likely to feel comfortable with what they do.
- Parents who act according to their values send a clearer message to their children than those parents who say one thing and do another.

Materials Checklist

Activity 2-2 Your Goals and Values

- ☐ Handout, "What I Care About"
- ☐ Pencils (for everyone)

Activity 2-3 Family Tree

- ☐ Handout, "Family Tree"
- ☐ Three markers or crayons (red, green, and orange for each participant)
- ☐ Pencils (for everyone)
- ☐ Newsprint

Activity 2-4 Values Voting

- ☐ Enough floor space for everyone to move around in
- ☐ Leader Resource, "Values Statements"
- ☐ 8 1/2" x 11" signs that read "AGREE," "DISAGREE," "UNSURE"

What's New?

Purpose: To give participants an opportunity to talk about what's been happening in their lives since the last session. To review what took place in the last session. To set the agenda for today's session.

Materials: None.

Time: 10-15 minutes.

Planning Note: In Session 2 it is important to continue your efforts to help group members bond together. You could review the men's activities of the past week and respond to their questions or concerns about peer support. As the facilitator, you should make note of who has returned to the group and make some statement about who is missing. If you know why a member is not present, say something like, "Donald couldn't make it today, but he called and said that he will return next week." This gives members the message that they are missed when they are absent, and that they are still important to the group. If there are any new members, it is important to help them feel integrated into the group. You might ask all members to introduce themselves, stating their name, the names and ages of their children, and anything else that they would like to share. Then you could ask for a volunteer to tell the new members about the group's purpose, what has happened since the program began, and what today's session is about. Another way to bring new members into the group is to use the "buddy" system, pairing a senior group member with a new member to help him get established. Before bringing a new member into a group, it is recommended that you meet with him individually and give him an orientation to the group.

At the beginning of each session, participants should be given an opportunity to talk about "leftover thoughts and feelings" from the last session and to share how, if at all, anything from the last session has affected their lives.

Reflecting on the previous session gives participants an opportunity to discuss ideas and reactions that they did not share at the time. They also can use this time to demonstrate how their behavior may have changed as a result of what they learned in the group (for example, a father may have tried out a different way of handling his child's misbehavior, based on what he learned in the last session). Sharing this new information with the group reinforces to other members that change is truly possible. Following the "What's New?" activity, the facilitator should state the goals of the day's session and how they are connected to the overall goals of the program. Say something like, "In today's session we are going to be talking about values. What we value has a lot to do with how we live our lives and how well we can fit into the world. Thinking about our values can help us evaluate our behavior, and it can help us explore how to adapt or change things about ourselves that we don't feel good about."

Procedure: Explain to the group that the beginning of each session is a time for participants to share any good or bad experiences they have had since the last meeting, as they tried to apply what they learned to their daily lives. Use the following questions to "re-group" the group and stimulate discussion.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Does anybody have anything he would like to say about the last session? Last week we discussed the list of topics we will explore in peer support. Now that you've had some time to think about these topics, does anyone have any comments? Are there any other topics that you would like to discuss?
2. Let's quickly review the ground rules that we developed for ourselves. This way we know that everyone is clear about how we want to work together. Is there any aspect of the rules that isn't clear?

If you did the "Name Game" in Activity 1-4, ask whether anyone wants to take a shot at remembering the names and number of children of each participant. If there are new members in the group, it might be fun to repeat the "Name Game." If you do this, repeat the directions to the group, but this time ask for a volunteer to go last, having to remember and repeat everyone's information.

Your Goals and Values

Purpose: To help participants establish priorities for their goals and values.

Materials: Handout, "What I Care About"; pencils (for everyone).

Time: 35-45 minutes.

Planning Note: It is important to create an environment where differences of opinion are encouraged and accepted. During the discussion questions, part of the facilitator's task is to help participants think through what gets in the way of their efforts to live by their values or accomplish their goals. Be sure to distinguish between obstacles over which the men have little control (such as job discrimination) and personal obstacles (such as not following through on interviews when they say that they value "having a good job" or not showing up for visits with their children when they value "providing for my children's needs"). Because this activity comes early in the curriculum, when you are still getting to know the participants, pay attention to any "inconsistencies" that you might hear in their statements. Yet it is premature to confront any individual about "negative" values or about statements that seem contradictory. Instead, make general observations about what you are hearing, and remind the men that there will be ample opportunity to address specific values, attitudes, and beliefs throughout the peer support sessions. Consider repeating this activity toward the end of the program, to assess whether participants have made any changes regarding their goals and values. The handout includes blanks at the end. Add additional values that you think may be of relevance in the group.

Procedure: Tell participants that in this session they will try to identify what they want out of life. Say something like, "In this session, you'll look at a list of goals and values and decide which ones are most important to you."

Distribute the handout "What I Care About." Review the directions, and then instruct participants to read and rate each item. Tell them *not* to write their names on the handouts, because you will collect them later. As instructed at the bottom of the handout, tell the men to put a star next to the three goals or values that are most important to them.

After 10 minutes of working individually, ask participants to pair off or work in small groups to share their responses for another 10 minutes or so. Suggest that they ask each other *why* they rated something "really important" or "makes no difference." (If you prefer, keep the men together to share their responses in the large group.)

Reconvene the large group to discuss the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Which values or goals did you rate as "really important"? Why?
2. Which items did you rate "makes no difference"? Why?
3. Are there any "really important" goals that you think will be hard for you to achieve?
4. Are there any values that you consider "really important" but that you find difficult to live by?
5. What kinds of things get in the way of your ability to live by your values?
6. How does being a parent influence your goals and values? (Would you value different things if you did not have children? Would you have different goals?)

What I Care About

Directions: Please indicate how you feel about each of the following values or goals by putting a check mark in the appropriate column. For now, ignore the blank spaces in the right-hand column.

	Really Important	**Important**	**Makes No Difference**	*
1. Making money	____	____	____	____
2. Being popular	____	____	____	____
3. Looking good	____	____	____	____
4. Having more children	____	____	____	____
5. Being married/having a life partner	____	____	____	____
6. Doing a good job of raising my children	____	____	____	____
7. Having fun	____	____	____	____
8. Getting a job I enjoy	____	____	____	____
9. Traveling to new places	____	____	____	____
10. "Partying"	____	____	____	____
11. Doing something that makes a difference in the world	____	____	____	____
12. Having a nice car	____	____	____	____
13. Having good sexual relationship(s)	____	____	____	____
14. Being a good athlete	____	____	____	____

(Continued on page 10)

	Really Important	Important	Makes No Difference	*
15. Living by my religion				
16. Staying out of trouble with the law				
17. Getting along with my family				
18. Expressing my creative side (dancing, music, etc.)				
19. Having friends I can count on				
20. Making it on my own				
21. Owning my own home				
22. Having a good education				
23. Living my life by the traditions of my culture				
24. Taking care of my parents in their old age				
25. Staying healthy throughout my life				
26. Having a career, not just a "job"				
27. ____________________				
28. ____________________				
29. ____________________				
30. ____________________				

Now that you've finished, go back and put a star (*) in the right-hand column to mark the three goals or values that are most important to you — the ones that you wouldn't want to live without.

Family Tree

Purpose: To help fathers identify values that have been passed down by family members and to increase their awareness of family accomplishments and family ancestry. To help fathers clarify for themselves what they value in their lives.

Materials: Handout, "Family Tree"; colored markers or crayons (red, green, and orange) and pencils (for everyone); newsprint.

Time: 35-45 minutes.

Procedure: In your own words, say something like, "Who we are as people, as parents, as friends, or as spouses is greatly influenced by the values held by the people in our family and by family friends and close neighbors. For some, this means that we adopted the qualities of our parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, etc. For others, it means that we swore *not* to be like the people who were significant in our lives. In the "Family Tree" activity, we will identify *who* the important people were in our development and what *values* or *principles* these people lived by. From this, we will develop a list of values that we want to live by as people and as parents. Our values, in turn, will influence how our children grow up and what they will be like as adults."

Give each man a copy of the "Family Tree" handout. The tree is made up of circles that list behaviors or values. Instruct the men first to write down under "People in My Life" (at the bottom of the tree) the names of people who influenced them as they were growing up. Next, instruct the men to write down in each circle the names of all the people they knew who *strongly* held the value or demonstrated the behavior listed in that circle. Finally, tell them to use the blank circles on the tree to fill in *additional* values or behaviors that were important to their family and community.

When everyone has completed his circles, distribute three markers or crayons (red, green, and orange) to each man. Ask everyone to put a ring around each circle with a color to indicate how important that value is to his life, in the following order:

Red: *very important*
Green: *somewhat important*
Orange: *not important*

Copy this guide on newsprint, using the colored markers, and post it in front of the room for reference.

Make sure that everyone understands the instructions before starting, and allow about 15 minutes for this. If you do not have enough markers to go around, tell the men to code their circles as follows:

Star (*): *very important*
Check mark: *somewhat important*
X mark: *not important*

When the men have finished, reconvene the large group to discuss the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Who are the people you placed on your Family Tree? What values did they live by?
2. Which values on the Family Tree were easy to connect with someone in your life?
3. Which values were most important to the people in your life as you grew up?
4. Which values are most important to you now? How many red circles (or stars) are on your Family Tree? Why are these values most important to you?
5. Which values are not important to you now? How many orange circles (or X marks) are on your Family Tree? Why are these values not important to you?
6. With which people's values did you agree as your grew up?
7. With which people's values did you disagree as you grew up?
8. What does this activity tell you about how your own values developed? Did you adopt the values of people who were close to you, or did you reject their values?
9. Of the values you rated "very important," which do you think are hard to live by? Why? What gets in the way?
10. Which of these values do you want to pass on to your children? How do you plan to do that?
11. Does the way you live your life reflect the values that you now have? How would you have to change your behavior to reflect your values?

Remind the group that there is great diversity among families when it comes to defining values and that they should respect this diversity. Knowing our ancestors' values helps us understand our own values and can give us a sense of direction and purpose.

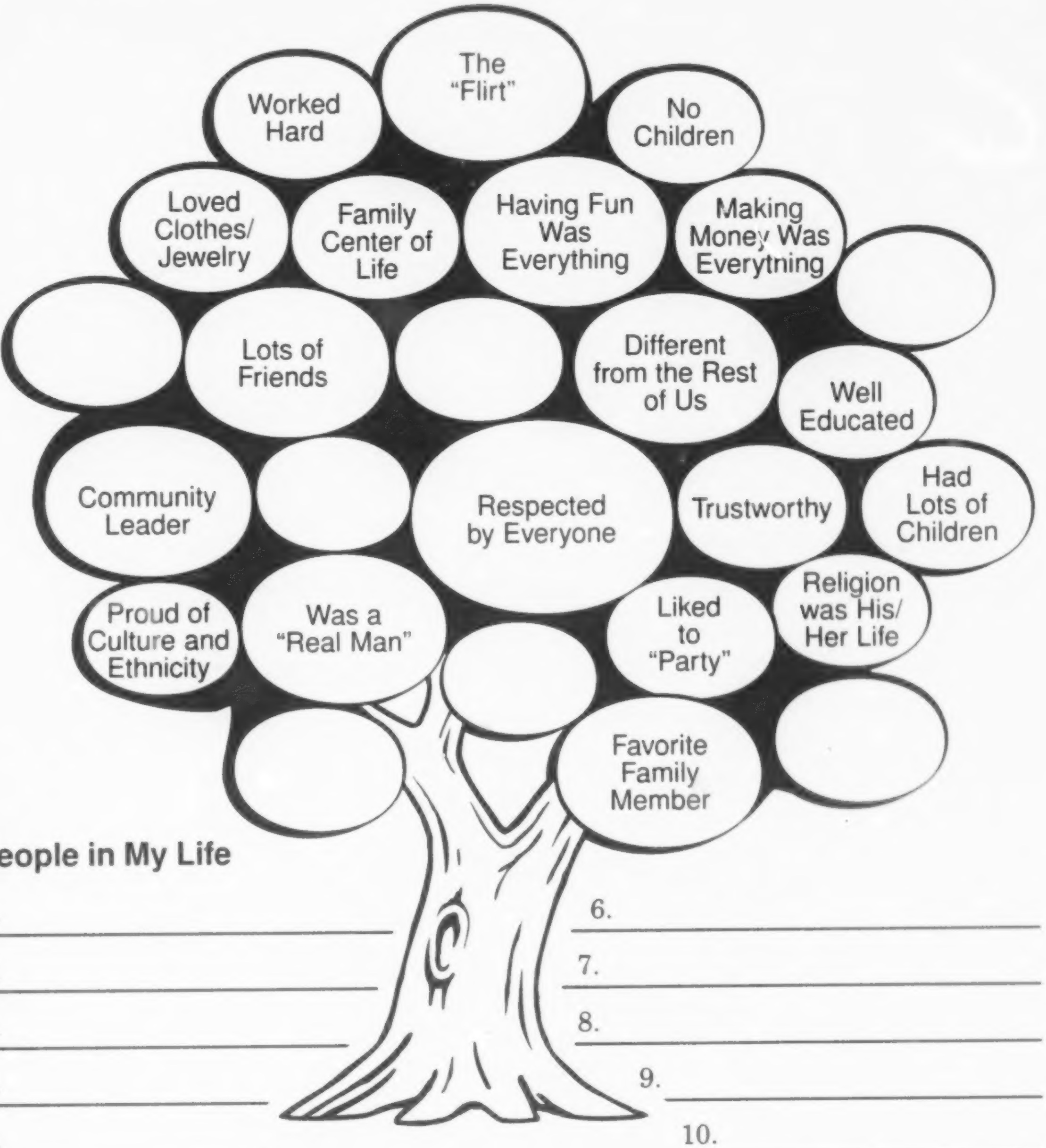
Optional Activities **Family Tree**

1. After completing Activity 2-3, ask each participant to draw his own Family Tree, filling in all the values that reflect how he is living now as well as the changes he hopes to make. Either give each participant a blank copy of the handout "Family Tree," or reproduce it on a large sheet of newsprint and create a Group Family Tree. This tree can then symbolize the changes that the men are seeking to make, particularly through their involvement in your program. The Group Family Tree should be posted where everyone can refer to it throughout the peer support sessions.
2. After completing Activity 2-3, tell the participants that they are now going to look at the Family Tree through the eyes of their children. Ask them to think about all the people who currently influence their children's lives. Who are these people? What kinds of role models are they? What values do they hold? What behaviors do they demonstrate to the children?

Give each participant a blank copy of the handout "Family Tree," and ask him to complete it with his children. When the men have completed the handout with their children, they should bring them to a later session for discussion with the group.

The goal of this activity is to get the men thinking about the values and behaviors of the people who are currently shaping the lives of their children.

Family Tree


The "Flirt"
Worked Hard
No Children
Loved Clothes/ Jewelry
Family Center of Life
Having Fun Was Everything
Making Money Was Everything
Lots of Friends
Different from the Rest of Us
Well Educated
Community Leader
Respected by Everyone
Trustworthy
Had Lots of Children
Proud of Culture and Ethnicity
Was a "Real Man"
Liked to "Party"
Religion was His/ Her Life
Favorite Family Member

People in My Life

1. ______________________
2. ______________________
3. ______________________
4. ______________________
5. ______________________
6. ______________________
7. ______________________
8. ______________________
9. ______________________
10. ______________________

Values Voting

Purpose: To encourage participants to explore their personal values.

Materials: Enough floor space for everyone to move around in; Leader Resource, "Values Statements"; 8 1/2" x 11" signs that read "AGREE," "DISAGREE," "UNSURE."

Time: 35-45 minutes.

Planning Note: Keep the following points in mind when conducting this activity.

- When only one or two group members express a particular value, it is important to support this minority viewpoint. Stand beside them to show your support, but make it clear that you do not necessarily support their value as much as the fact that they took the risk and stood up for a value that is unpopular in this group. You might say, "It's tough to be the only one who feels a certain way, but it shows that you are strong enough to stand up for what you believe."
- If some commonly held value position is not expressed by anyone in the group, your role as leader is to remind the group convincingly of that position. You can stand in that value position and say, "Some people who would stand here believe that. . . ." In this way, *all* viewpoints will be discussed.
- You may be asked to share your own values with the group. Keep in mind that, as a leader, you are important (and have influence) as a role model for the men. Therefore, it is best to say, "I'm more interested in hearing what *you* believe." Tell them that your opinions are not "right," but are only right for you, and that you prefer not to influence their opinions by sharing your personal values.

Review the list of values statements on the Leader Resource, and *choose four to eight statements that are appropriate for your group*. If necessary, create additional statements that reflect the men's needs and personalities. Discuss each statement fully, but maintain a lively pace to keep the men's interest.

Before the session, post signs labeled "agree," "disagree," and "unsure" in different locations in the room.

Procedure: Explain to the men that this activity will help them explore their personal values. Tell them that you will read several statements for their consideration. When they know how they feel about each statement, they should walk to the sign that best describes their opinion about it. (They may also choose to stand somewhere between two signs, if they are "unsure" but are leaning toward "agree" or "disagree.")

Emphasize the following points:

- There are no right or wrong answers; there are only opinions.
- No one should "put down" or dismiss a value just because it is different from his own.
- No one should try to influence anyone else's opinion about a statement. Peer pressure can interfere with a group member's freedom to express his own opinion.
- However, if someone's explanation of his position causes someone else to see things differently, the men should feel free to change their position.

Point out the three signs, and read the first statement. Allow all the men to position themselves in response to it. Then, start with the least commonly held viewpoints, and ask those participants to explain why they have chosen to stand where they are. (If this subgroup is very small, ask each person why he chose to stand there.) If some common opinion about that statement is not expressed, you should express it yourself. Before moving on to the next subgroup, commend the first participants for being willing to explain why they chose their position. When you have gotten enough responses, move on to the last subgroup. After the first statement has been discussed fully, go on to the next one. Pacing is important; don't drag out the discussion, but make sure most points of view have been expressed. Finally, address the following questions to the entire group.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How easy or difficult was it to vote on these values?
2. Which statement was the hardest to vote on? Why?
3. To what extent does your behavior in the outside world fit with what you've said here in the group?
4. Which of these values do you want to pass on to your children?
5. Which of these values, if you fully expressed them, could get you into trouble?
6. Which values reflect the things that you want to change about yourself?
7. Have you changed your ideas about values over time? If so, how? And why?

Leader Resource

Values Statements

1. Men are as capable of caring for children as women are.
2. By age 13, sons do not need or want their fathers to hug them or say "I love you."
3. Men who father children should be forced to pay child support.
4. A male is more of a man (becomes a man) when he fathers a child.
5. A man's main responsibility to his children is to provide financial support.
6. If a man has been disrespected, it is OK for him to use violence to get respect.
7. In general, men should pay the cost of a date.
8. Crying is a sign of weakness in a man.
9. Police should stop and question anyone who fits the profile of a drug dealer.
10. It's a woman's responsibility, more than a man's, to take care of birth control.
11. Men should use condoms only if they have had sex with a lot of partners.
12. It's OK for a man to date or marry a woman from a different race or cultural background.
13. I would be comfortable carrying a gun to protect myself.

Feedback/Wrap-up

Purpose: To give group members an opportunity to express what they thought about today's session. To review the key concepts. To set up the agenda for the next session. To provide closure for the session.

Materials: None.

Time: 10-15 minutes.

Procedure: In wrapping up Session 2, ask the fathers to describe what they have gained from it. Ask them whether they see any connection between what their values are and how they live. Did the session help them to understand how they are developed their values? Who do they think influenced their choice of values? Finally, do they see that their influence as a father affects their children's value system and how their children feel about themselves?

Ask the fathers for their overall reaction to the peer support group thus far. Is the program meeting their expectations? If not, why not? What would make the sessions better for them?

Thank them for their participation, and inform them that Session 3 will explore how society and their personal experiences and cultural stereotypes have contributed to their own definitions of manhood. Remind them of when the next session will meet.

Session **3**

Boys to Men: Experiencing Manhood

Activity **3-1**	**What's New?**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **3-2**	**What's It Been Like?** **or**	
Activity **3-3**	**Manhood Collage**	☞ **70-90 minutes**
Activity **3-4**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Key Concepts

- The life experiences of participants have affected how they see themselves as men and fathers. Many participants share similar experiences. But all group members have had experiences in their families, relationships, schools, and communities that are unique to them as individuals.
- Because boys in the United States make no formal transition into manhood, individuals' perceptions about manhood are varied. These views are shaped by parents, peers, television, and the community environment.

Materials Checklist

Activity **3-1** **What's New?**

☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Activity **3-3** **Manhood Collage**

☐ Pictures from magazines
☐ "Feeling" words
☐ Construction paper
☐ Scissors
☐ Glue

What's New?

Purpose: If the group completed the handout "What I Care About" in Activity 2-2, use newsprint to post the list of values that the fathers said were most important to them.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Has anyone thought about values since we met last week?
2. Would anyone like to share his thoughts about the people who helped shape his values?
3. Would anyone like to comment about the list of values that we prepared last week? Seeing the list again, do you still think these values are important? Would anyone like to add any other value to the list?
4. After reflecting on your values, do any of you want to change things about your life? If so, what sorts of things?
5. Did any of you have an opportunity to complete the Family Tree from Activity 2-3 with your children or partner? If so, what did you learn about your children's values? Who are the people who have the greatest influence over your children? What do you like or dislike about the values that are guiding your children's lives?

What's It Been Like?

Purpose: To enable participants to reflect on their past and current experiences as sons, men, and fathers. To offer men the opportunity for peer support as they talk about these experiences.

Materials: None.

Time: 70-90 minutes.

Planning Note: When choosing between this activity and "Manhood Collage" (Activity 3-3), it is important to know how comfortable the men feel talking with each other and how they respond to discussion questions. If the group gets into discussions easily and most of the fathers participate, choose this activity. But if the group has many silent members, or monopolizers, or those who don't yet trust each other enough to respond to personal questions, choose "Manhood Collage."

Many men in this program have experienced abuse, neglect, poverty, and racism at some point in their lives, and all these factors affect how they see themselves as men. They may not have had good relationships with their own fathers and may be unwilling or unable to talk about their past. Thus, this activity can be hard for the men. The facilitator should be aware that in some instances it will be helpful (and less stressful) to ask the participants to think of men other than their fathers who may have been influential in their lives. The fact that they have made it thus far suggests that, somewhere along the way, someone was there for them. If any father seems truly upset by this activity, connect him with the case manager, or refer him directly to additional counseling.

Procedure: Tell the fathers that Sessions 1 and 2 have helped them get to know each other, what they value in their lives, and how these values have been developed. Then say something like, "In today's session we will talk about manhood. We will try to answer the question 'What is a man?' We will also discuss how you came to be the men that you are today."

Start the activity by saying that the ideas people hold about manhood have a lot to do with how they were raised; with the kinds of relationships they had with other men, including their fathers; and with the things that happened to them in the past. Tell them that this activity will give each man an opportunity to talk about what his life has been like.

First, ask each person in turn to share the following:

- His age.
- The name(s) and age(s) of his child(ren).
- A little about the family he grew up in, including who raised him, the number of children in his family, and how he would describe himself as a boy growing up.
- The neighborhood he grew up in.

You can conduct this activity in several ways:

- Lead an informal discussion, spending a few minutes on each question, and let the fathers respond freely to whatever is said; or, if they prefer, have them talk generally about their lives as men and fathers.
- Discuss only one or two questions, and spend the extra time hearing from all the fathers.
- Write each question on an index card, give one card to each father, and ask him to respond to that question. (If there are more than 15 participants, you can add some other relevant questions, or have more than one person respond to the same question.)
- Give each father a copy of all the questions, asking him to choose one that he feels comfortable talking about.

When everyone has shared the basic information about himself, select an approach from the options above to discuss their experiences as sons, men, and fathers. If you choose an informal discussion, as facilitator you should play an active role to guide the men to the important issues of manhood (such as what it has been like to be a father, a worker, a provider, etc.). Keep the discussion moving, and, if necessary, focus it to include some of the issues raised in the discussion questions.

In selecting questions, begin by allowing everyone to talk about the men who were important to him growing up (who these men were, how the community viewed them, what kind of work they did, etc.). Then focus on where and from whom the participants got messages about what it is to be a man (for example, the definition of a "successful man," their idea of men as workers, providers, etc.). After everyone has participated in this discussion, focus on the men's relationships with their own fathers. Finally, focus on their relationships with their children and how they view themselves as men, fathers, workers, and providers.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Think back to when you were a boy. Who were the men in your life that you remember seeing every day? Who were the men who were most important to you? (Encourage the participants to think of all possibilities. Their role models did not have to be "upstanding" men in the community. They may have had good relationships with men from all walks of life. Encourage open, honest sharing.)
2. What good or helpful things did you get from these men? (Participants might share such things as "how to do something," "how to deal with women," "how to be a man.")
3. What kinds of jobs did the men in your community or neighborhood have?
4. What ideas did these men give you about a man's role as a provider?
5. How did people around you view men who did not work?
6. What was your relationship like with your own father (or, possibly, stepfather or your mother's boyfriend)?
7. As a boy, what were your ideas about "being a real man"?

8. Who were your male heroes?
9. As a boy, what kind of job or career did you hope to have when you grew up?
10. As a boy, what did you think would make you "a man"?
11. What is your earliest memory of feeling that you had become a man?
12. What were your feelings on the day you became a father?
13. What has it been like to be a father so far? What has been good about it? What has been hard?
14. What kind of father do you want to be?
15. Which of your own experiences as a boy would like to share with your child?
16. Which experiences do you wish you had had as a boy?
17. Would you like your child's life to be the same as yours or different?
18. If you could change your relationship with your father today, what would you change?
19. Has your relationship with your father influenced your relationship with your child? How?
20. Who were the most important women in your life? What did they teach you about manhood?
21. What do you want your daughters to know about what it's like to be a man?

Manhood Collage

Purpose: To give the participants an opportunity to reflect on their past and current lives as sons, men, and fathers. To help the men think about their experiences as adolescents moving toward manhood.

Materials: Pictures from magazines that depict "male" life as a teenager (such as pictures of sports, the playground, school, graduation, food, candy, clothing, family, friends, beer, cigarettes, cars, cologne, women, music, work, etc.); "feeling" words (such as *cool, hot, bad, crazy, wild, smooth, diss, respect, friends, depressed, happy, confused*, etc.); construction paper, scissors, and glue.

Time: 70-90 minutes.

Planning Note: The goal of "Manhood Collage" is to help the men think about their experiences as teenagers, when they were making the important transition into adulthood (and manhood). The use of pictures helps them to recall those powerful feelings. For men who have not resolved some of the difficulties of their teenage years, these feelings may still be close to the surface.

The collage activity can generate discussion in a group where some members are uncomfortable "just talking." The pictures give them something tangible to grasp and help to focus discussion. They also get everyone involved, even the quiet members. If your group might have difficulty talking freely in "What's It Been Like?" (Activity 3-2), choose this activity instead. Be sure to end with a discussion about the participants' experiences as men and fathers, using the questions provided (or your own).

Before the session, cut out pictures and "feeling" words that depict aspects of male life, particularly those of adolescence. Browse such magazines as *Sports Illustrated, Essence, Ebony, Weight Lifting, Jet, THROUGH, Popular Mechanics, Latino,* or any others that reflect the culture and ethnicity of the participants. Mount each picture and each word on a separate sheet of construction paper. Make enough of these so that each participant can select four or five images and words that represent who he was as an adolescent — and what manhood meant to him. (You can get back-dated magazines from your friends, the doctor's or dentist's office, the barber shop, etc., allowing you to build a "collection" over time.)

Procedure: Tell the participants that they are going to do a fun activity to help them remember what they were like as boys, thinking about becoming a man. In this activity, "a picture is worth a thousand words."

Place all the pictures and words in the center of the room, on a table or the floor. Say something like, "I would like you to pick up as many pictures or words as you want that show the group who you were as an adolescent. Pick items that show the activities, feelings, or ideas that you thought would make you a man."

When everyone has gathered four or five pictures or words, lead a discussion using the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What were you like as a teenager? What was important to you? What did you spend your time doing? Who were your friends?
2. What do the pictures and words that you chose tell us about you during your teen years? How did you feel about yourself? In what ways have you changed?
3. What kinds of things did you do as a boy that helped you make the transition to manhood? What people were important at this time in your life? How did they influence your becoming a man?
4. Which people in your neighborhood or community did you see or have contact with every day? Who were the men in your life? Which men did you look up to?
5. What ideas did these men give you about being a man? About being a father?
6. What kinds of jobs did the men in your community or neighborhood have?
7. What ideas did these men give you about a man's role as a worker and provider?
8. How did people around you view men who did not work?
9. As a boy, what kind of job or career did you hope to have when you became an adult?
10. What was your relationship like with your family? With your father (or, possibly, stepfather)?
11. What thoughts do you remember having about what your life would be like if you became a father someday?
12. Were you a teenage father, or did you have friends who were? If so, how did this experience shape you (or your friends) as a father? What would be different if you had become a father when you were older?
13. In what ways are your children's lives like your own as a boy? In what way are they different?

14. From the pictures and words that you chose to represent who you were as a teenager, which would you like your children to someday choose or not choose?
15. Who were the most important women in your life? What did they teach you about manhood?
16. What do you want your daughters to know about what it's like to be a man?

When everyone has had an opportunity to talk about his life during adolescence, have a general discussion about how boys become men. Include all the factors that influence a young man's development, including friends, parents, schools, media, and the community (prompt the men to discuss not only people but also their teenage opportunities, ideas, values, experiences, world events, etc.).

Feedback/Wrap-up

Planning Note: At the end of this session, participants may be left with a mixture of good and bad feelings including joy, sorrow, anger, sadness, or depression. They have been asked to dig up memories of their childhood, some of which were painful. They also have had to confront how discrimination and stereotypes have affected their lives. It is important to have each participant "check out" of the group by stating how he is feeling now that the session is ending. It may be helpful to ask each father to think of something he can do to handle his emotions: talk to a friend, play some ball, visit his child, etc. It may also be helpful to ask the men to think about the adults who had a positive impact on their young lives. In your own words, ask the following questions to start the discussion.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Does anyone want to share his reactions to today's session? What are your thoughts or feelings?
2. Would anyone like to comment on what you learned about yourself in today's session?
3. In recalling the past, remember to include the men and women who had a positive impact on your life. Would anyone like to tell us how you plan to reach your goal of being a positive influence in your child's life?

Tell the fathers that Session 4 is about communication. Say something like, "We are going to examine what goes wrong when people communicate, and we'll learn new ways to communicate more effectively. All of us have had times when we just didn't understand what someone was trying to tell us. By looking at how we send and receive messages, we will improve our ability to get along with the people in our lives who are important to us."

Thank the men for their participation, and remind them of when the group will meet next.

Session 4

The Art of Communication

Activity **4-1**	**What's New?**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **4-2**	Optional Warm-up Activity: **The Telephone Game**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **4-3**	**What Is Communication?**	☞ **30-40 minutes**
Activity **4-4**	**One-Way/Two-Way Communication**	☞ **20-25 minutes**
Activity **4-5**	**Active Listening**	
Activity **4-6**	**Stating Your Needs**	☞ **35-35 minutes**

Optional Activities

Activity **4-7**	**Parents' "Communication Traps"**	☞ **30-45 minutes**
Activity **4-8**	**Listening to Understand**	☞ **30-45 minutes**
Activity **4-9**	**Through a Child's Eyes**	☞ **15-20 minutes**

Activity **4-10**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Key Concepts

- Communication involves sending and receiving messages. We communicate both with verbal messages (our words and how we say them) and with nonverbal messages (our facial and bodily expressions).
- To avoid miscommunication, we use *feedback*. That is, the listener tells the speaker what he or she heard so that the speaker can correct any misunderstanding.
- An important skill in communication is *active listening*. This involves paying attention to nonverbal cues and to the feelings behind the words. Active listening keeps the speaker engaged in the conversation.
- *Assertive communication* expresses feelings and needs in a way that is direct and nonjudgmental; it enables the speaker to take responsibility for what he or she wants. Using "I" statements is the basis of assertive communication.
- Young children learn how to communicate by watching and imitating their parents' verbal and nonverbal communication styles. Parents need to be aware of how their ways of communicating with each other affect their children.
- Because young children have a limited vocabulary, they often communicate their feelings and needs through their behavior as well as through nonverbal gestures. Parents need to "tune in" to what young children are trying to communicate through their actions as well as their words.

Materials Checklist

Activity 4-3 What Is Communication?

☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Activity 4-4 One-Way/Two-Way Communication

☐ Handout, "Sample Design"
☐ Paper and pencil (for everyone)

Activity 4-5 Active Listening

☐ Handout, "Good Listening Skills Checklist"
☐ Prepared index cards (one card per pair)
☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Activity 4-6 Stating Your Needs

☐ Leader Resources, “Different Styles of Communication” and “Suggestions for Assertive Communication”

☐ Handout, “Stating Your Needs”

☐ Pencils (for everyone)

☐ Newsprint

☐ Markers

Activity 4-7 Parents’ “Communication Traps”

☐ Leader Resource, “Parents’ Communication Traps”

☐ Newsprint

☐ Markers

Activity 4-8 Listening to Understand

☐ Leader Resource, “Communication Situations”

☐ Handout, “Suggestions for Listening with Care and Understanding”

☐ Newsprint

☐ Markers

What's New?

Purpose: To remind the fathers of what they talked about in Session 3, using the discussion questions to prompt their reactions.

Materials: None.

Time: 15-30 minutes.

Planning Note: Tailor the following discussion questions to focus on the specific ideas that the men shared in Session 3. If they expressed a lot of strong emotions about their male roles, summarize their general feelings, and clarify any themes that emerged. This will help members who missed the session to feel connected to the group.

Using the discussion questions, ask for volunteers to share their reactions to last week's session. Try to get a balance between positive and negative experiences, making sure that feedback is constructive. If the men have a great many reactions to the last session, tell them that you want to give everyone a chance to speak and therefore will limit them to one comment each.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would someone volunteer to describe what we discussed in the last session?
2. What ideas about manhood did you gain from the last session?
3. In the time since we last met, did you have any moments when you thought about who you are as a man? What were your thoughts?
4. What have you learned about the men in this group whose ethnic or cultural backgrounds are different from yours?
5. Do you have anything to say about the last session that was not already discussed?

Optional Warm-up Activity
The Telephone Game

Purpose: To help participants understand how messages get distorted when people don't listen effectively. To help parents recognize the importance of active listening.

Materials: None.

Time: 15 minutes.

Planning Note: Session 3 offers a variety of ways to practice basic communication skills and active listening. The optional activities focus on communication with children; use Activities 4-7 through 4-9 if many group members have regular contact with their children.

Procedure: Begin by having all the participants sit in a circle. Tell them that you are going to whisper something into the ear of the man on your left. Then instruct that man to whisper the *same* message to the man on his left. Continue this process until the whispered message reaches the last person, who then says out loud what he was told.

Repeat this activity twice. The first time send a "nonsense" message (for example, "Today in California two out of five people are wearing three earrings in their left ear; at least one earring is a diamond stud"). Next, follow this by a real or "sense" sentence — something that is important or relevant to the group and will evoke strong feelings (such as "Racism makes raising children much harder for parents of children of color than for other parents").

Use the following questions to discuss what happened in the activity.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What happened when the group repeated the message around the circle? How much did the message get distorted?
2. Which of the two sentences got changed more? (Follow this up by asking, “Do we listen better when something is important to us and when it makes sense to us?”)
3. What lessons did you learn about communication from this activity?

What Is Communication?

Purpose: To define communication and its essential components. To emphasize the importance of feedback in effective communication.

Materials: Newsprint and marker.

Time: 30-40 minutes.

Procedure: Begin by telling participants that today the group will explore communication — what it is, what makes it easier, and what makes it harder. Ask the men to brainstorm for a definition of communication. Their list might include such behavior as hearing, talking, speaking clearly, asking questions, making facial expressions, getting a point across, understanding what someone else is saying, and so on.

Explain that *communication* is the process of sending and receiving messages. All the items on their list are steps in the process. Point to the following diagram, which you have prepared on newsprint:

Sender ⟶ Message ⟶ Receiver

Explain that, when people communicate, one person (the sender) sends a message (a statement, a question, a feeling, an idea, etc.) to another person (the receiver). Next, have the men consider this conversation between two workers:

> *Joe:* "Can I borrow your hammer?"
> *Pete:* "How long do you need to use it?"
> *Joe:* "Until I finish building these stairs."
> *Pete:* "Sorry, man. I'm going to be needing the hammer myself as soon as I come back from my break."

Ask participants how well these two men seemed to communicate. Point out that the conversation was straightforward and that Pete did a good job of learning how long Joe needed the hammer before he responded to the question.

Next, consider this conversation between Daryl and his friend Cindy:

> *Cindy:* "Do you want to go to my mother's house for dinner?"
> *Daryl:* "Okay."
> *Cindy:* "But do you really want to go?"
> *Daryl:* (in an angry voice) "You're driving me crazy! Why don't you make up your mind? First, you say you want to go. Now you aren't sure."

Ask participants to explain what happened in this conversation. What did Daryl think Cindy was saying when she asked, "Do you want to go to my mother's house for dinner?" (It seems that he interpreted her question as a statement of her own desire to go. But it turns out that she really wanted to know how *he* felt about it. She was open to discussing the idea, but he thought she had already made up her mind — that she wanted to go and was asking him to go, too. Therefore, he thought that she was being irrational, and asked, "Why don't you make up your mind?" Although she may have felt that he was falsely accusing her, she had never actually said what she wanted to do.)

Point out that communication problems arise because people are unique; they can experience the same conversation in completely different ways. In addition, men and women often have different communication styles. Men tend to come right out and say what they want, while women tend to reach a decision jointly by talking about an issue before deciding. One style is not "right" or "better"; they are just different. But as Daryl and Cindy show, different styles of communication can lead to misunderstandings and conflict.

Explain that the best way to avoid miscommunication is to tell the sender what you heard and to give the sender a chance to correct you. This is called *feedback*. For example, Daryl might have said, "Are you saying that you want to go to your mother's?" or "It's okay with me, but only if you want to."

After reviewing this communication path, ask the following questions to discuss the role that feedback plays in communication.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Is there anyone with whom you find it easy to communicate? Why do you think the two of you communicate well?
2. Is there anyone with whom you have a hard time communicating? Why do you think the two of you miscommunicate?
3. Would somebody like to tell us what he heard so far today about communication?

As the men are responding, model feedback by asking them questions to clarify what you are hearing. Ask them to state what you (the sender) said to them (the message) and what they (the receivers) heard. Tell them that they can ask you questions (get feedback) to clarify what they think they heard.

One-Way/Two-Way Communication

Purpose: To demonstrate to participants the importance of asking for clarification and giving feedback in effective communication.

Materials: Handout, "Sample Design"; paper and pencil (for everyone).

Time: 20 minutes.

Procedure: Tell the participants that you want to illustrate what they've been learning about communication. Explain that you want them to participate in a short communication activity in which they will discover how easy (or how difficult) it might be to follow another person's instructions. Give the following instructions:

Pair up with another person, and sit back-to-back. One person in each pair will be a "sender"; the other will be a "receiver." Senders will be given a drawing, and receivers will get a blank sheet of paper.

The senders will try to explain to the receivers how to draw the design that is on their sheet of paper.

The receivers cannot talk at all — asking no questions and making no comments.

Have the men pair off, and assign the roles of sender and receiver. Give each sender a copy of the handout "Sample Design." Give each receiver a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. Instruct the senders not to let the receivers see the design. The senders will give oral instructions about how to draw the design. Emphasize again that the receivers *cannot* ask questions or get feedback. Tell the senders to describe the design in any way they choose. Finally, warn the pairs that they will have more work to do after the receivers have finished drawing, so the senders should not show the drawing until you tell them to do so.

When the receivers have finished drawing, briefly discuss the activity. Ask:

- What was the experience like for the senders?
- What was the experience like for the receivers?
- Senders, how close did the receiver come to drawing the design correctly? (Make sure that the senders do not yet show the design to the receivers.)

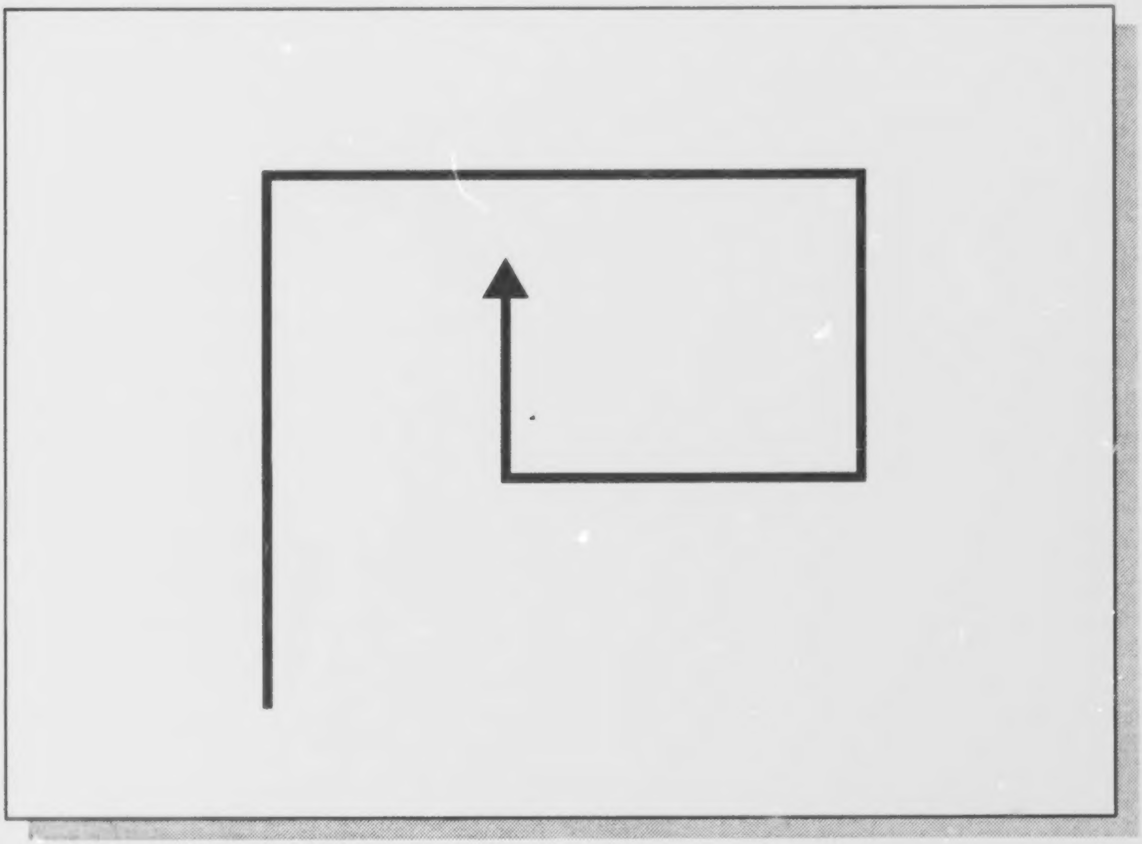
Next, give a clean sheet of paper to each receiver. Instruct the pairs to repeat the activity, but this time allow the receivers to ask questions and get feedback about what they are supposed to be drawing.

When everyone has finished, compare the designs that the receivers first drew with the ones that they finally drew. Use the following questions to discuss the activity.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Which of the two experiences was more difficult? Why? Do the senders and the receivers agree about this?
2. What caused communication to break down? (Participants will probably comment about not being able to ask questions the first time.)
3. Which experience took longer? (Often, the second experience took longer. If so, explain that communicating effectively — providing and getting feedback — sometimes involves work.)
4. What did you learn from this activity? (Emphasize that asking for and getting feedback increases a listener's chances of understanding a message correctly.)
5. In what ways can you relate this activity to other communication situations in your life? (Ask for examples of how feedback can improve communication with partners, children, employers, etc.)

Sample Design



Active Listening

Purpose: To increase effective listening skills.

Materials: Handout, "Good Listening Skills Checklist"; prepared index cards (one card per pair); newsprint and marker.

Time: 40-50 minutes.

Planning Note: Prepare index cards for this activity by writing the following instructions on the front of the cards and numbering them 1, 2, or 3 on the reverse side. Each pair of men will need one index card.

1. Listen attentively to your partner for about a minute. Then begin to get distracted. Look at your watch or the clock, glance around, drop your pen — but don't be obvious about this.
2. Pay attention to your partner, but disagree with everything that he says. Interrupt while he is talking, and tell him what you think he should do — whether or not he asks for your advice. Point your finger, and try to be aggressive.
3. Listen to your partner carefully. Without talking, try to show him that you understand. Look him in the eye, and pay careful attention. *Do not speak.*

Number 3 is an example of good listening skills. The listener pays attention, makes eye contact, and refrains from speaking or interrupting — which are all good skills in "active listening." Distinguish between the silence of active listening — which communicates to the speaker that the listener is attentive and interested — from a silence that conveys boredom, disinterest, being judgmental, etc.

Procedure: Tell participants that in this activity they will learn about listening skills. Explain that they will work in pairs, with one person as the speaker and the other as the listener. The speaker will talk about some recent problem he has had — some conflict with a partner, a boss, or a friend, for example. The listener will be given an index card with special instructions to follow that demonstrate the different styles of listening. Thus, the listener's response will not be influenced by what the speaker is saying. (The listener's response should not be taken personally, because he is following the instructions on the index card.)

Divide the participants into pairs, and have them choose roles (or you can assign them). Instruct the speakers to think of some problem that they feel comfortable discussing (nothing too personal or intimate). Then distribute the index cards to the listeners, and tell them not to share the instructions with the speakers. Begin the activity, explaining to the pairs that you will stop them after three minutes.

At the end of three minutes, bring the group together, and ask the speakers to describe their partners' listening skills. Did the speakers feel that they were being understood? Why or why not? Ask the listeners how they felt in their roles.

Now ask some of the listeners to read aloud the instructions on their cards. Remind the speakers that their partner's behavior was influenced by the instructions on the cards, and not by anything that the speakers said. Now, brainstorm with the group to discover some of the things that a listener can do to "hurt" or to "help" the listening process, starting with things that "hurt."

Write the following words on newsprint, and add the group's responses under the appropriate heading.

Hurts Listening	**Helps Listening**
Looking away	Making eye contact
Interrupting	Acting concerned
Saying something that doesn't relate to the speaker's point	Asking clarifying questions
Acting distracted	Providing feedback

Ask the men to share their own examples of when a listener responded to them in ways that hurt or didn't help. For example, how did they feel when someone seemed to judge what they were saying or became defensive? Ask what kind of *nonverbal* messages they have received which told them that someone was not listening or was judging them.

After completing the list of things that can hurt listening, brainstorm about behaviors that can help listening. (Make sure that the information on the handout "Good Listening Skills Checklist" is included in the list of things that help listening.)

Explain to the men that *active listening* involves more than just hearing what someone is saying. Active listeners try to understand the *feelings* underneath what the speaker says, and they try to show the speaker they are interested.

Say to the men: "Active listeners concentrate on what the other person is saying. Don't think ahead to what you can say as a comeback. To check whether you listened well, repeat the speaker's comments in your own words without adding any of your own opinions. For example, suppose that Tyrone is talking about the maternal grandmother of his child and says, "Melissa's mother is such a pain. She gets on my back as soon as I walk in the door." A listener, Ike, might respond by saying, "Give Mrs. Johnson a break, man. She does so much for you. You couldn't make it without her." If you were Tyrone, what would you think of Ike's response? Was Ike an active listener? What do *you* think Tyrone is feeling? How well did Ike tune in to Tyrone's feelings?

The group's responses should indicate that Ike was way off base as a listener. As a result, Tyrone is going to be even more frustrated after talking with Ike. Even if Ike has a point, Tyrone is not going to be able to hear it. Ask the group, "What could Ike have said to Tyrone to show that he was really trying to understand Tyrone's feelings?" New responses for Ike might include, "So, I guess you feel that Mrs. Johnson harasses you, right?"

Point out that *paraphrasing* the speaker's message is a good way to test your understanding of the message. If you misunderstood, the speaker can correct you and explain things more clearly. And if you did understand, the speaker will know that you are really paying attention.

Have the men regroup into their original pairs (from Activity 4-4). Again, one person is the speaker, and the other is the listener. The speaker should talk about another recent problem he has had, and this time the listener should use the active listening skills he has learned. Remind the men to use both verbal and nonverbal skills in communicating.

After three minutes, use the following questions to discuss active listening.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Speakers, how well did your partners listen? Did they make you feel understood? How? What nonverbal messages did they give you?
2. Listeners, was it difficult to be an active listener? What was easy or hard about it?
3. In what situations could you use active listening to improve your communication?
4. How could active listening help you in communicating with your children? (Hint: Think of when your children feel upset or have a problem to solve.) How could active listening be useful with the mother of your children?

HANDOUT

Session 4
Activity 5

Good Listening Skills Checklist

- Act concerned about what the speaker has to say.
- Give the speaker your full attention.
- Make direct eye contact, if you feel comfortable doing so.
- Lean forward toward the speaker.
- Nod or shake your head in response to the speaker's comments.
- Use brief verbal responses that indicate you are listening, such as "yes," "I see," "go on," etc.
- Change your facial expression as appropriate (for example, to show concern or excitement).
- Get feedback. Test how well you understand the speaker by telling him what you think he's saying.
- Try to figure out the feelings beneath the speaker's words. Ask a question to determine whether you are correct about how the speaker is feeling. For example, "Are you nervous about going to court?" "Are you bummed out, man?"
- Don't interrupt, judge, or criticize the speaker.

Stating Your Needs

Purpose: To help the fathers evaluate how they communicate their ideas and needs to others. To give participants an opportunity to practice communicating assertively.

Materials: Leader Resources, "Different Styles of Communication" and "Suggestions for Assertive Communication"; Handout, "Stating Your Needs"; pencils (for everyone); newsprint and markers.

Time: 35-45 minutes.

Planning Note: Before starting this activity, copy the Leader Resource "Different Styles of Communication" onto newsprint. On a separate sheet of newsprint, write the six "assertive" skills listed in the Leader Resource "Suggestions for Assertive Communication." Post both of these in the front of the room.

Procedure: Remind the men that so far in Session 4 they have practiced active listening in order to improve communication with the people in their lives. This activity looks at how we communicate our needs to other people. Ask the fathers, "How effective do you think you are in telling someone else what you want or need?" "What gets in the way of your being effective?" Tell them that one way to get what they need and want is to communicate *assertively*: to state clearly what they need or want without putting the other person down.

State the two basic rules of assertive communication:

1. Express your feelings and needs.
2. Express these in a way that is direct and nonjudgmental and that enables you to take personal responsibility. (Use "I" statements.)

Tell the fathers that you would like to compare assertive communication with two other styles that do not work so well: passive communication and aggressive communication. Then review the three styles of communication described in the Leader Resource "Different Styles of Communication." Ask the men to think about which style of communicating is most like how they relate to others.

After you have defined the three different styles of communication, tell the men that now they will practice using assertive communication. Give them the handout "Stating Your Needs," and go through the four steps of assertive communication, using examples from your own life. When you are sure that everyone understands the four steps, ask the men to pair off. Instruct the pairs to take turns being a speaker and a listener. Each speaker will have about three minutes to communicate something that he wants or needs, using the four-step model outlined in the handout. The man who is the listener should assess how well the speaker used the four steps and should offer *constructive* criticism and suggestions for improving his assertive communication skills.

After three minutes, tell the men to switch roles and repeat the activities. When everyone has had a turn being the speaker, reconvene the large group. Discuss the men's reactions to this activity by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What are the three different styles of communication that we talked about? What are your thoughts about each style of communicating?
2. How easy (or how difficult) was it for you to use the assertive style of communication?
3. How well do you think assertive communication would work with your children?
4. How well do you think assertive communication would work with other people in your life, such as your friends, partner, and employer?

Leader Resource

Different Styles of Communication

Passive Style: Giving in to others too easily without making a strong enough effort to see that your *own* wishes, thoughts, and feelings are heard.

Aggressive Style: Pushing for what you want without regard for other people's feelings. (This may involve putting people down, accusing, threatening, blaming, yelling, judging, and fighting.)

Assertive Style: Standing up for yourself and expressing your true feelings, while making an effort to be considerate of other people's feelings.

Suggestions for Assertive Communication

1. Maintain eye contact.
2. Maintain a good body posture.
3. Speak clearly and firmly.
4. Don't whine or use an apologetic tone.
5. Use hand gestures and facial expressions for emphasis.
6. Use "I" statements. (Tell the person what you feel and need and want; say why the person's behavior is a problem for you. *Example:* "I get angry when you come home late, because it messes up my plans.")

HANDOUT

Session **4**
Activity **6**

Stating Your Needs

1. When you ____________________
Describe what the listener is doing that makes you feel uncomfortable or good.

2. I feel ____________________
Describe your feeling.

3. Because ____________________
Tell the listener why you feel the way you do.

4. So could we (or you) ____________________
Suggest a solution, or state what you want.

Optional Activity **Parents' "Communication Traps"**

Purpose: To help parents identify the communication patterns they use in response to their children's behavior.

Materials: Leader Resource, "Parents' Communication Traps"; newsprint and marker.

Time: 15-20 minutes.

Planning Note: Before this activity, copy onto separate sheets of newsprint the seven terms defined in the Leader Resource "Parents' Communication Traps."

This activity will help the fathers think about the things they may want to change in how they communicate with their children. It is important to keep the mood "light," allowing everyone to acknowledge his patterns of communication without feeling threatened or embarrassed. If you feel that the group might not be supportive enough, postpone doing this activity.

Procedure: Begin by telling the men that this activity will explore the various styles of communication that they have experienced in their families. Remind them that in earlier sessions they focused on what it was like growing up in their particular families. They talked about their values and the people who helped shape those values, including their mothers and fathers. Make the point that how our family members communicated with each other greatly influences how we communicate with each other and with our children.

Remind the fathers of the definition of communication (Activity 4-3) and that it involves both verbal and nonverbal messages. Ask them to think for a minute about how their parents communicated with them when they were children. What words or phrases stand out in their minds? What nonverbal signals did they get from their parents to show happiness, anger, disappointment, concern, etc.?

Now go around the room, asking each father to give one word that summarizes his parents' (or caregiver's) communication style. (Such words might include "The Look," "Silence," "The Screamer," "The Preacher.") If the group has trouble starting, offer a word to describe your own parents' style of communication. When participants give their descriptive words, record them on newsprint.

Post on newsprint the terms from the Leader Resource "Parents' Communication Traps." Tell the men that you are going to read a description of these words, and then each of them should stand near the word that best describes his style of communicating with his children. Remind them that nobody is a perfect parent and that all parents fall into one or more of these "communication traps" at various times. When everyone has selected a word that describes his "trap," ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What is it like to admit your "communication trap" to the group?
2. Who else has chosen the same word as you? Can one of you give the group an example of how parents communicate in this role? (For example, what words or gestures do you tend to use over and over again with your children?)
3. Which of these words describes how your parents communicated with you as a child? As an adult, do you communicate with your children as your parents did with you? How is your style like or different from your parents'?
4. How do your children usually respond to you when you fall into your "communication trap"?
5. Do you use this style of communication with anybody other than your children? Who?
6. What would you like to change about how you communicate with your children? With others?
7. What do you think you would have to do to change how you communicate with your children?

Leader Resource

Parents' Communication Traps

The Commander-in-Chief. Parent keeps things under control and demands that the child get rid of the negative feelings and "shape up." Orders, commands, and threats are the tools used by the Commander-in-Chief to maintain order and to keep the upper hand.

The Preacher. The Preacher preaches to the children to get them to behave. He or she uses *Shoulds* a lot, "You should do this" and "You should do that," making the child feel guilty. The preacher is very concerned that the child have the *proper* feelings. This is the parent who says, "Shame on you, you should know better. What would the neighbors think?"

The Know-It-All. Parents who play this role try to show the child that they "have been there" and therefore they know the right answers to everything. These parents lecture, advise, and direct their children, showing that they are superior to their children. This is the parent who says, "I told you so."

The Judge. This parent has already decided that the child is guilty without a trial. Judges believe that they are right and the child is wrong. (Or that adults are right and children do not have a say.) This is the parent who says, "I knew you would. . . ."

The Critic. The critic tends to use put-downs, name calling, and jokes to handle his children's behavior. This is the parent who says, "You are always . . ."; "Why can't you ever. . . ?" "You're so dumb, stupid. . . ."

The Psychologist. The psychologist tries to analyze everything. This parent wants to hear all the details so that he or she can be in a better position to set the child straight. This is the parent who analyzes and diagnoses everything the child says and does — looking for some hidden meaning. This is the parent who asks, "What do you feel about this?" a hundred times a day.

The Worrier. This is the parent who tries to make everything right all of the time. This parent is always asking what's wrong, makes "mountains out of mole hills." This is the parent who never lets his or her child out of sight, who fights the child's battles, and does not believe his or her child can do wrong. This is the parent who always says, "What did so and so do to you?"

Adapted from Dinkmeyer and McKay, *The Parent Handbook*, 1982.

Optional Activity **Listening to Understand**

Purpose: To help the fathers think about their verbal and nonverbal communication styles. To increase their ability to listen effectively to each other and to their children.

Materials: Leader Resource, "Communication Situations"; Handout, "Suggestions for Listening with Care and Understanding"; newsprint and markers.

Time: 30-45 minutes.

Planning Note: This activity requires role-playing situations where the fathers take on the role of a noncustodial parent; a child (son or daughter); and/or a girlfriend. Before conducting this activity, review the ground rules for role-playing activities:

1. Be as realistic as possible (do not exaggerate the role).
2. Consider a wide range of responses (even if they are responses you would not ordinarily use).

When the original actors finish their roles, allow other participants to offer suggestions (or offer some possible solutions the group might not have thought of).

Procedure: Begin by telling the participants that in this activity they will practice listening to each other in a new way. Besides responding to what someone says through words, a good listener also responds to the speaker's body language, tone of voice, and facial gestures. As they learned in Activity 2-5, this type of listening is called *active listening,* which means working hard to understand what the speaker is saying and *feeling.*

Ask whether anyone has ever been in a conversation where he felt that the other person was saying one thing but meaning or wanting something else. Ask for volunteers to give you examples of this. What does it feel like to talk with someone who does this? What do you do or say to get the person to be clear about what he or she wants to say? (For example, suppose your partner says, "Oh, it's OK. It's OK. I don't mind" — when you know that she is clearly upset and angry.)

Remind the group of Activity 4-4, in which they practiced giving *feedback*. In order to understand what someone really means, it is often necessary to tell the speaker what you heard and then to ask him or her to correct your understanding.

Tell the fathers that now they are going to sharpen their listening skills by role-playing some typical situations that happen between partners or between parents and children. You are going to describe a situation to them, and then two men will role-play that scene. One person will have to figure out what the other person is trying to communicate.

Read a situation from the Leader Resource "Communication Situations." Choose a situation that somebody in the group has experienced, or create one of your own. Ask two fathers to volunteer to role-play the situation; one will be the speaker, and the other will be the listener. They will have three minutes to act out the scene. Instruct the speaker about how you want him to behave in the situation. The listener's job is to try to figure out what the speaker is saying and feeling. The listener should use both verbal and nonverbal signals to give feedback about what he is hearing the speaker say.

The rest of the group should listen attentively to what is going on between the two actors, so that they can evaluate how well the speaker communicated his feelings and how well the listener understood the speaker. Reconvene the group after about three minutes of each role play. Then use the following questions to discuss what happened.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Speaker, how well did the listener listen? Did you feel understood? Did the listener understand the feelings you were experiencing? What nonverbal signs told you that the listener was understanding your message?
2. Listener, was it difficult to figure out what the speaker was trying to tell you? What was easy or hard to understand? Did the speaker's words match his feelings? If not, how did you get the speaker to admit what feelings were behind his words?
3. For those of you who were observers, what did the listener do that seemed helpful to the speaker? What did the listener do that may have made it hard for the speaker to communicate his feelings?

After the group has watched a few role plays, distribute the handout "Suggestions for Listening with Care and Understanding." Go through the suggestions, asking the men to add ideas that they think may improve communication.

Leader Resource

Communication Situations

SITUATION 1: Father and eight-year-old daughter. The father is three hours late picking up his daughter because he had to work overtime. He feels very bad about being late, especially because he had promised to take her to the circus, and now they've missed the last performance. He walks in the door and sees his daughter looking out the window waiting for him. She looks as though she's been crying.

Daughter's role: You are really disappointed that your father showed up late, but you don't want him to know that you are hurt, so you pretend that you don't care.

Father's role: Try to get your daughter to tell you what she is feeling.

SITUATION 2: Father and girlfriend/spouse. You are visiting your mother with your five-year-old son and your girlfriend. Your mom has been a great support to you. Anytime you have needed a babysitter, she's been there to help you out. Although you've offered to pay her, she has always refused. The one thing that bothers you is that she is always criticizing the way you raise your son. You are afraid to say anything to her, because you need her to watch your son, and you don't want to get her angry. Your son accidently breaks something in your mother's house, and she starts yelling at you to "mind him."

Father's role: Your mother asks you why you have a face on. You would like to tell her to mind her own business, and yet you find yourself telling her that nothing is wrong. Instead, you end up yelling at your girlfriend.

Girlfriend's role: Try to figure out what your partner is feeling. Tell him what you think is going on.

SITUATION 3: Father and his children's mother. You and your children's mother are trying to work out a schedule for you to visit your two children. You want to see the children more often, but your work schedule changes so often that you cannot commit to any particular days. You are hoping to arrange visits week by week, depending on your work schedule. But you don't know how to approach your children's mother about this because she is still very angry about your separation. Whenever you need to talk with her about the kids, her anger gets in the way of her ability to listen to you.

Father's role: Try to tell your children's mother what kind of visitation schedule you need and why.

Children's mother's role: You are angry at your children's father, yet you realize that he has been trying to be a good father. Try to manage your anger as you listen to his request.

SITUATION 4: Father and six-year-old son. Your six-year-old son comes into the house after school and seems really quiet. Unlike his usual noisy behavior, he slips past you and heads straight to the room he shares with his brother. When you realize he is not around, you go into his room and see him lying on the bed, staring up at the ceiling. You ask him what is wrong, and he says, "Nothing, I'm just tired."

Son's role: The kids in school have been pushing you around and calling you names. Your father has always told you to defend yourself if anyone bothers you, but these kids are big, and you are really scared. You are afraid that your father will be angry with you for not sticking up for yourself, so you don't want to tell him what's been going on.

Father's role: You know something must be wrong with your son, but he won't talk to you. Try to help him to tell you what's bothering him.

SITUATION 5: Father and seven-year-old daughter. Your seven-year old daughter comes running into the kitchen really excited, yelling, "Daddy! Daddy! Guess what?" while you are hurrying to get out the door for work. (You're running ten minutes late, and your boss already warned you about being late.) You look at your daughter and see that she is OK, so you say, "Not now, talk to me later." Your daughter grabs your arm saying, "But Daddy, I want to show you something." By now you are so frustrated that you push your daughter away and yell, "I told you to get lost. Now beat it!" Your daughter turns and runs out of the room with tears running down her face.

Father's role: It is now evening, and you want to talk with your daughter about what happened this morning.

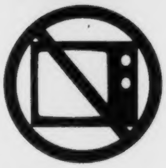
Daughter's role: You feel bad that nobody seems to ever have time to listen to you, but you are worried that your father will get angry again if you tell him this.

HANDOUT

Session **4**
Activity **8**

Suggestions for Listening with Care and Understanding

1. Stop what you are doing, and look at the speaker.
2. Reduce distractions; turn down the radio or TV.



3. Make direct eye contact, if you feel comfortable doing so. If you are listening to a child, get down to the child's eye level.
4. Nod or shake your head to let the speaker know you are listening.

5. Pay attention to the speaker's body language.
6. Use brief verbal responses that show you are listening, such as "yes," "I see," "go ahead."
7. Tell the speaker what you heard, to test how well you understood what he or she said.
8. Try to figure out the feelings underneath the speaker's words. If the speaker is a child, say what you think the *feeling* is that he or she may be trying to communicate through actions. (For example, "Does your frown mean that you are sad?" or "Did you throw that because you were angry?")
9. Don't interrupt, judge, or criticize the speaker.
10. Tell the speaker how glad you are to listen.

Adapted from *Parent Time Curriculum Guide*, Pace Family Literacy Program, Family Resource Coalition, 200 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1520, Chicago, IL 60604, (312) 341-0900.

Optional Activity **Through a Child's Eyes**

Purpose: To help fathers think about how they communicate with their children. To help them understand the impact that their behavior has on their children's self-esteem.

Materials: None.

Time: 20 minutes.

Procedure: Begin by asking the men to think about a situation in which they wanted someone to listen who was either too busy or otherwise unwilling or unable to listen. Ask for volunteers to share their experiences. What did it feel like for someone not to listen or to ignore them? Who were they trying to communicate with? What did the nonlistener do? How did this make the speaker feel?

Next, ask the men to think about a situation when they were with a child who was trying to communicate something but they were too busy to listen. Ask them what they thought the child was feeling. What did the child do to get their attention? How did they respond?

Tell the group that you would like to take a few minutes to role-play such a situation. Ask for three volunteers to play three roles: a mother, a father, and their four-year-old son. Read aloud the following scenario, directing the volunteers to act it out. After about three minutes of role play, ask the questions on the next page.

> **Situation:** You've spent the entire day with your four-year-old son. It is 7:30 P.M., an hour before his usual bedtime. The boy's mother has just come by to discuss some financial issues concerning child support payments, and both of you are really upset. In the midst of this serious discussion, your son begins to try to get your attention. You and his mother both try to ignore him, but he keeps whining and pulling on your arm. Eventually you push him out of the room, saying, "We're busy; go play."

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How did each of you feel about your roles?
2. How did each of you communicate your needs?
3. Son, how did it feel to be ignored? What would you have liked your parents to do?
4. What do you think the child was feeling? (Was he worried about his parents' fighting? Did he miss his father and want his attention? Is a four-year-old capable of understanding the parents' needs? What was he trying to accomplish by his behavior?)
5. Parents, how did it feel to be interrupted? What could you have done differently to help your child get what he needed while still proceeding with your conversation?
6. How should parents decide which issues they should talk about in private, as opposed to those they talk about in front of their children?

Feedback/Wrap-up

Begin by asking for a volunteer to summarize what the group talked about and learned in today's session. Ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would somebody like to test his new "listening skills" by summarizing what we talked about today?
2. Do you have a different view of communication after participating in this session? If so, how has your view changed?
3. How helpful were the activities about active listening (4-5) and assertive communication (4-6)?
4. Which of the skills and/or techniques that we practiced today do you plan to use in your daily lives?
5. Do you think that these skills and techniques will improve your relationships? If so, how? If not, why?

Tell the fathers that you hope today's session about communication will make a difference in their lives. Admit that it takes time and practice to change one's style of communication, and point out that the peer support group will give them an opportunity to fine-tune their skills. Thank the men for their participation, and remind them of when the next session will meet.

Fathers as Providers

Activity **5-1**	**What's New?**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **5-2**	**Father of the Year**	☞ **35-45 minutes**
Activity **5-3**	**Being a Provider:** What Gets in the Way?	☞ **35-45 minutes**
Activity **5-4**	**Looking Ahead**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **5-5**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Key Concepts

- Men who are successful as fathers work hard to care for their children. To be successful, a father must have the desire and commitment to put the needs of his children foremost in his mind.
- Fathers are legally, financially, and morally responsible for their children, regardless of their relationship to their children's mother. It is the right of every child to be supported by *both* parents.
- When a father declares paternity for his children, there are benefits for him as well as for the children.
- Noncustodial fathers have an obligation to pay child support, even if their children are receiving public assistance and their support is used to reimburse the welfare system.

Materials Checklist

Activity 5-2 Father of the Year

☐ Handouts, "Case Studies: Father of the Year" and "Father of the Year Award"
☐ Pencils (for everyone)
☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Activity 5-3 Being a Provider: What Gets in the Way?

☐ Leader Resource, "Questions About Candidates"
☐ Handout, "Case Studies: Father of the Year"
☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Activity 5-4 Looking Ahead

☐ Handout, "My Personal Contract to My Children"
☐ Pencils (for everyone)

What's New?

Planning Note: Before conducting the next two sessions it will be important to know what the participants' experiences have been with establishing paternity, paying child support, and getting custody or visitation, so that you can emphasize the most relevant issues.

In this session, the men will explore their role as fathers and providers, and look at what gets in the way of their efforts to provide for their children. The next session, "Noncustodial Fathers: Rights and Responsibilities," is designed to give the men factual information about the child support system and clarify their rights and responsibilities as noncustodial fathers. To prepare for these sessions, you will need to know answers to technical questions about child support procedures, welfare, and the interaction between these two programs, as well as about establishing paternity. The Leader Resource in Activity 6-3, "Facts About Child Support and Paternity," summarizes key points about child support and establishing paternity that you should be sure to review before conducting these sessions. You will also need to know about Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and its grant amounts for families of different sizes in your locality.

In the next session, it may be useful to invite someone from the local Child Support Enforcement agency and a legal rights attorney who specializes in child support issues to present this information to the men. (If your group includes mothers who are noncustodial parents, be sure to adapt the case studies to include a case that resembles their lives. Also, change the activity "Father of the Year" to "Parent of the Year.")

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would anybody like to share his reactions to Session 4, "The Art of Communication"? If so, what are your thoughts or feelings?
2. Did anyone try any of the listening skills we learned? If so, with whom did you try them? How did it go?
3. Did anyone ask for anything or respond to requests in an assertive way? If so, what happened?
4. Is there anything about active listening or assertive communication that you'd like more information about?
5. How do you think these listening and communication skills will help you in your relationships with your children? How will they help in your relationships with other people?
6. Did any of you have a situation this week where you noticed a difference in the way you communicated with your children? If so, would you like to talk about it?

Father of the Year

Purpose: To identify the qualities of successful noncustodial fathers.

Materials: Handouts, "Case Studies: Father of the Year" and "Father of the Year Award"; pencils (for everyone); newsprint and marker.

Time: 35-45 minutes.

Planning Note: Conduct Activity 5-2 either by using the handout of case studies or by following the optional procedure that is described after the handout.

Procedure: Begin this activity by saying something like, "In today's session we are going to talk about what it means to be a successful father. We will talk about supporting our children. And by thinking about the father's role in raising children, we will identify the qualities or characteristics that good fathers have. Then we will nominate one of you for the 'Father of the Year Award.' Finally, we will look at some things that keep a father from being a good provider for his children."

Ask the participants to describe men they know (or knew as children) who they think fit the description of a good father: Who are these men, and what qualities or characteristics make them good fathers? Record all responses on newsprint. (The list should include such characteristics as: loving, patient, nurturing, provides financial support, accepts responsibility, visits the child regularly, seeks employment, supports his partner, etc.). Use the following questions to discuss the list (allow approximately 10 minutes).

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be a good father?
2. How realistic is the list of characteristics that we made? Do you know any fathers who have all these qualities? If so, what is it that makes these men so successful as fathers?
3. Which of the characteristics on our list do you think you have?
4. Are any of the characteristics we listed difficult for fathers who do not have custody of their children? If so, what makes them difficult?
5. What kinds of things (or which people) make it difficult for you to be a good father?
6. From our list of characteristics, which are the most important qualities that any father should have?

Now tell the participants to think about the problems facing fathers who do not have custody of their children. Say something like, "There are many qualities that make a father successful, and yet each father is different. Some have good jobs, but others don't; some have good relationships with their child's mother, but others don't. Each father deals with a unique set of circumstances in attempting to be a successful parent. Therefore, to decide whether or not a father is successful, we must pay careful attention to each man's situation."

Explain to the men that in this activity they will consider case studies of five fathers in different circumstances, and they will be asked to nominate one of these men as Father of the Year. Distribute the handouts "Case Studies: Father of the Year" and "Father of the Year Award." Repeat that the men must select their candidate from the five men in the case studies. (If time is limited, select three of the five case studies — the three that most closely resemble the situations of men in your group.) Explain that the men will have to identify the qualities that their candidate has, and remind them of the list they already made. They should identify the qualities of the winning father on the award certificate.

Form small groups, and then read the case studies aloud. Have the groups debate among themselves which father should get the award. When each group has picked a Father of the Year, ask for volunteers to tell the larger group which father was selected and why. Allow approximately 15 minutes for the groups to choose their candidates before reconvening the large group. Then ask the following questions about how candidates were selected.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What positive qualities do all the fathers in the case studies have in common?
2. Consider each candidate separately. What is the most positive thing about him? Is there anything about him that hurts his chances of becoming Father of the Year? If so, what is it?
3. What characteristics were most important in choosing your candidate for the Father of the Year Award?
4. To what degree did the candidate's payment of child support help him become Father of the Year? Under what circumstances would you select someone to be Father of the Year if he did not support his children financially?
5. Does any candidate's life resemble yours? Which candidate's situation is most like yours?
6. What qualities would be listed if *you* were a candidate for Father of the Year? What do you feel you do best as a father?
7. What circumstances in your life would make it hard for you to be Father of the Year (such as not seeing your children, not working, etc.)?
8. Who and what gets in the way of your being a good father?
9. How do you feel when you think you can't be the kind of father that you want to be?
10. What do you hope to change about your situation as a father? What kinds of things do you plan to do to make these changes possible?

Case Studies: **Father of the Year**

CANDIDATE 1: JEFF. Jeff is 29 years old and is the divorced father of two boys, ages five and three. He works as a welder, and whenever he can find work, he gives his ex-wife money for child support. His ex-wife works nights as a checker in the local supermarket. Jeff sees his children one weekend a month, and he calls them about once a week. Jeff recently moved in with his girlfriend, whom he has been seeing for about two years. She has three children, ages seven, five, and three; although she receives some public assistance, she gets no support from the father of her children. Jeff sometimes gives his girlfriend some of the money he should be using to pay child support. He loves all five children, and he figures that this is the best way he can care for all of them.

CANDIDATE 2: MARK. Mark is a 33-year-old unemployed father. From his first marriage, he has a 10-year-old child, with whom he does not have a relationship. Mark also has two children from another relationship; they are now four and six years old. Mark left their mother, a drug addict, about a year ago. He loved her, but he could not deal with her drug use. For the last year Mark has been trying to get custody of the two children so that he can provide a more stable life for them. He has gone to court a number of times, but the judge refuses to give him custody until his girlfriend declares him to be the father of her children and he establishes paternity. This makes Mark extremely angry, but he continues to see his children as often as he can, while pursuing his efforts to establish paternity.

CANDIDATE 3: ALEX. Alex is 37 years old and the father of three children, ages 12, 9, and 5. He has a good job as a carpenter and has always paid his child support on time. Unfortunately, Alex has not seen his kids in the past three years, because they moved with their mother to another state. Although he is sober now, three years ago Alex had a serious drinking problem. On occasion, he even hit his wife and children, although he was always drunk at the time. After his wife left him, Alex checked himself into an alcoholism treatment program, and he is now involved in AA meetings and counseling. He is genuinely sorry for his past behavior and wants desperately to get his family back, but his wife will neither see him nor allow the kids to visit him. Alex refuses to give up hope that someday she will change her mind. He is also hoping that, as the children get older, they will be able to make their own decisions about seeing him. Meanwhile, he continues to send them child support money, and he has even opened a savings account to help pay their college tuition.

CANDIDATE 4: TONY. Tony is a 41-year-old father who has four children, ranging in age from 11 to 16 years old. He is living with the mother of his two youngest children, and he tries to keep in contact with his two older kids. Tony has not had steady employment for the past six years, and he has not paid child support during this time. He has given all his children money whenever he managed to get some work, but that has never been regular. He spends time as a volunteer in his church, and he has always been involved in local politics. Everyone considers Tony to be a nice guy who gets along with people. He has made it a point to be involved in his children's lives by playing ball with them, going to church with them, attending school functions, and the like. Tony is very proud of his kids and considers himself to be a good father. He has never legally established paternity and doesn't see the need for it.

CANDIDATE 5: VICTOR. Victor is a 24-year-old unemployed father. His girlfriend recently had their second child. Victor lives with his girlfriend and children, and he hopes that someday they can get married. He has not worked in over a year and therefore has not been able to pay child support, but he takes care of the children every day so that his girlfriend can go to school to get a GED. When he is not watching the children, he often goes out to spend time with his friends. Victor hasn't been looking for work because he says that his girlfriend needs him to be home with the kids. Their only source of income is her TANF grant, and money is often scarce. To make it through the month, they often go to Victor's mother's house for dinner, and they have borrowed money from her from time to time.

Optional **Procedure**

Instead of using the handout "Case Studies: Father of the Year," tell the men that you would like them to think about the problems they are facing in trying to care for their children. Say something like, "Each of you is struggling to be the best father you can be for your children. Yet, like all fathers, you face personal obstacles that may get in the way of always being successful. So I would like you to think about your own situation to evaluate what you do well and also what you need to work on to be more effective in your role as a father and provider."

Tell the men that this activity will help each of them to identify qualities they have that would make them a candidate for Father of the Year. Remind them of the list of qualities that the group has just generated, and invite each of them to declare himself as a candidate. Men who want to run for the award will have to list their special qualities on the award certificate and present it to the entire group. They will have three minutes each to convince group members of the reasons why they should get the award. The fathers who do not nominate themselves will act as judges. After all the candidates have had an opportunity to speak, ask the judges to select the winner, stating the reasons why he was chosen. Use the following questions to discuss how the Father of the Year was selected.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What positive qualities do all the candidates have in common?
2. What is the most positive thing about each candidate?
3. Judges, which factors were most important in selecting the Father of the Year?
4. To what degree did a candidate's payment of child support contribute to his being selected as Father of the Year?
5. Candidates, what was it like to run for Father of the Year?
6. If you did not choose to run, what circumstances prevented you from running (such as not seeing your children, not working, etc.)?
7. How do you feel when you think that you cannot be the kind of father you want to be?
8. What do you hope to change about your situation as a father? What kinds of things do you plan to do to make these changes possible?
9. Would you vote to make your own father the Father of the Year? Why or why not?
10. Do you think that your children would vote for you? Why or why not?

FATHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The National Association of Quality Fathers recognizes:

____

as the recipient of the Father of the Year Award.

This special father has the following qualities:

1. ____
2. ____
3. ____
4. ____
5. ____
6. ____

Signed: *The National Association of Quality Fathers*

Being a Provider: What Gets in the Way?

Purpose: To help fathers understand the things that get in the way of being able to provide for their children financially. To help fathers understand how their children benefit from regular child support.

Materials: Leader Resource, "Questions About Candidates"; handout, "Case Studies: Father of the Year" (from Activity 5-2); newsprint and marker.

Time: 35-45 minutes.

Procedure: Introduce the activity by saying something like, "In the last activity we talked about what it takes to be a good father, and then we read the case studies to select the Father of the Year. In deciding which candidate most deserved the award, one thing we considered was how well he provided for his children. Now let's look at the case studies again, this time focusing on the candidates' role as providers. What are the financial realities for their children?"

Tell the men that you will read one of the case studies aloud and then will ask some questions about that father's success as a provider. Read the first case study, and then ask the corresponding questions from the Leader Resource "Questions About Candidates." Repeat this process for at least three case studies.

After the case studies have been discussed, ask the following questions about being a provider.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be a provider for your children?
2. Which of these candidates' problems with child support or paternity most closely resembles your situation?
3. Why do you think some men pay child support while others do not?
4. Does a father's relationship with his children change when he can't provide for them? If so, how? What about the father's relationship with the children's mother?
5. How do you think a child's life is affected when the father does not pay child support?
6. When you were a child, did your father support you financially? What was that experience like? Did your experience as a child affect how you support your children? If so, how?
7. What is it like for you when you can't provide for your children?
8. For those of you whose children receive some kind of public assistance, what concerns do you have about their future? How much money do they actually have to live on? What do you think will happen to them as they get older and may no longer be eligible for help?
9. What plans do you have to improve your child's financial circumstances in the future?

Leader Resource

Questions About Candidates

CANDIDATE 1: JEFF. Jeff is trying to do the best he can to support his own two children as well as his girlfriend's three children, who receive no support from their father.

- Should Jeff be giving his child support money to his girlfriend?
- What do you think it's like for Jeff's ex-wife, who is trying to support her children on a very tight budget?
- How do you think Jeff's children feel about his dividing up his child support money between two households?
- What advice would you give to Jeff? To his ex-wife? To his girlfriend?

CANDIDATE 2: MARK. Mark loves his children and is trying to gain legal custody. His main obstacle is getting his children's mother to claim him as the legal father.

- What could Mark have done differently at the time his children were born? What can he do now?
- What happens when a couple's plans to stay together forever just don't work out? How can children be protected from the things that go wrong when parents break up?
- How might Mark deal with his disappointment and anger over what his girlfriend is doing?
- What responsibility does Mark have to his 10-year-old son?

CANDIDATE 3: ALEX. Alex is paying for his past mistakes and feels bad about not being able to have a relationship with his children.

- How can he show his children that he cares about them?
- How might Alex deal with the pain and powerlessness he must feel over not being able to see his children?

CANDIDATE 4: TONY. Tony believes that informal relationships are best. He is a good father to his children, but he does not want to establish paternity and has not been able to live up to his financial obligations.

- How do you think Tony's children feel about his relationship with them? Do you think the older children feel differently than the younger children?
- How do you think Tony feels when his children want something that he can't provide for them?
- How do you think the two mothers of Tony's children feel about his relationship with their children? About his unwillingness to establish paternity?
- How might Tony's unwillingness to establish paternity affect the children as they get older?

CANDIDATE 5: VICTOR. Victor is a very involved father who is devoted to taking care of his children, and he supports his girlfriend in many important ways.

- What do you think about the way Victor is supporting his children?
- What financial problems do you think the family is having?
- How are children affected when their parents have little income?
- Is it more important for Victor to continue staying at home to care for his two children, or should he look for a job?
- What suggestions do you have for Victor and his family?

Looking Ahead

Purpose: To give participants an opportunity to think about how things will change as they become more successful in providing for their children. To help each father reflect on how his children will benefit from his efforts to be consistently involved in their lives.

Materials: Handout, "My Personal Contract to My Children."

Time: 15 minutes.

Procedure: Tell the fathers that they will now have a chance to think about the future, when they will be in a better position to support their children. Say something like, "I'd like each of you to close your eyes for a few minutes and think ahead to the next few years. Imagine that you have accomplished your goals and are now working full time and paying child support each week. You are also seeing your children regularly. When you have a picture in your mind of what this will be like, open your eyes." After everyone has opened his eyes, ask each man to describe what he hopes his life will be like. Use the discussion questions to help the men talk about what they hope for in the future.

End this activity by giving each participant a copy of the handout "My Personal Contract to My Children." Ask the fathers to think about ways they can improve their relationships with their children. What would they like to do for and with their children to show that they are trying to be good fathers? Encourage them to list their ideas on the contract and to sign it.

For those fathers who do not have contact with their children, ask them to think of ways they can handle this difficult challenge. For example, could they send a card or a letter to their children? Could they stop by their children's school, home, or job? Can they imagine a future time when they have reunited with their children? If so, what steps do they need to take now to make this happen?

▼ Discussion Questions

1. When you picture the future, what do you imagine your life will be like?
2. How do you think your relationship with your children will change? What about your relationship with your children's mother?
3. How do you think it will feel to be working full time?
4. What words would you use to describe how you will feel when you are working?
5. In what ways do you hope to have more control over your life?
6. What steps do you plan to take to accomplish your goals? What help will you need?
7. Imagine that it is 15 years from now and your children are adults. What will they say about you as a father? As a provider?
8. In what ways will your support and involvement change your children's lives?
9. What do you hope your children will say to their children about you as a provider?

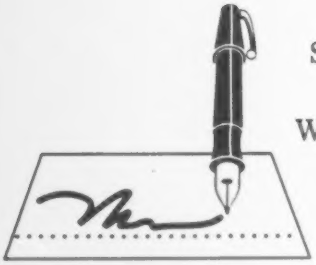
My Personal Contract to My Children

I, ______________________________

father of ______________________________

want to be a good father to my children. I will show my children that I am working hard at doing the best job I can by making the following commitments to them:

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________



Signed: ______________________________

Witness: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Feedback/Wrap-up

At the end of this session, the fathers may have strong feelings about their ability to provide for their children. Remind them that they must overcome personal situations to be successful providers, but point out that each can make a commitment to put his children's needs foremost in his mind. The men may also have questions about what's expected of them as noncustodial parents, particularly concerning the Child Support Enforcement system. Tell them that their questions will be addressed in the next session. Then ask the following questions to get their reactions to today's session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would anyone like to describe his reactions to today's session? What are your thoughts or feelings?
2. Would any of you like to add to what you have said about what it's like to be a father or about what you hope to see written on your Father of the Year Award?
3. Would anyone like to comment on how he views himself as a provider for his children?
4. As a result of today's session, what, if anything, do you hope to change about your role as a provider?

Close the session by saying something like, "In the next session, we will continue discussing child support. First, we will share opinions and feelings about having to pay support, and then you will have an opportunity to ask questions about your rights and responsibilities as noncustodial fathers. We will cover information about the Child Support Enforcement system, paying child support, visitation, custody, back debts, and so on. Before ending, let's spend a few minutes brainstorming the questions you have for the experts. We will share this list with the Child Support Enforcement staff so that they can come prepared to address your concerns." Thank the men for their participation, and remind them of when the next session will meet.

Noncustodial Fathers: Rights and Responsibilities

Activity **6-1**	**What's New?**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **6-2**	**Paying Child Support**	☞ **25-35 minutes**
Activity **6-3**	**Rights and Responsibilities**	☞ **45-55 minutes**
Activity **6-4**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Key Concepts

- Noncustodial fathers should know their legal rights as parents, such as the right to see their children on a regular basis, the right to request review of a child support order if their financial situation changes, and the right to sue for custody if they can prove that it is in the child's best interest.
- *All* custodial parents, regardless of whether they receive Public Assistance, are entitled to receive child support from the noncustodial parent of their child.
- When a man declares paternity for his children, there are benefits for him and his children.
- It is the right of every child to be supported by *both* parents.
- Visitation rights are not connected to child support payments. A noncustodial parent who is not paying child support still has the right to visit his or her children. Likewise, even if the custodial parent refuses to let the noncustodial parent visit the children, the noncustodial parent still has an obligation to pay child support.

Materials Checklist

Activity **6-2** Paying Child Support

☐ Leader Resource, "Facts About Child Support and Paternity" (from Activity 6-3)
☐ Handout, "Should I Pay Child Support?"
☐ Pencils (for everyone)

Activity **6-3** Rights and Responsibilities

☐ Leader Resource, "Facts About Child Support and Paternity"
☐ Handout, "Questions for the Experts"

What's New?

Begin the activity by asking the men what they thought about Session 5, "Fathers as Providers." In your own words, ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would somebody like to summarize what was talked about last session?
2. What reactions have you had this week to our discussion about being a father? About being a provider?
3. Have you come up with any ideas about how to deal with things (or people) that get in the way of being a successful provider for your children? If so, what are your ideas?
4. What, if anything, did you discuss about our last session with your partner, friends, or family?
5. Did anyone have an opportunity to complete his "Personal Contract to My Children"? If so, what commitments did you list on the contract?

Remind the men that today's session will continue their discussion about paying child support. Explain that in the first activity they will examine the different reasons that fathers give for not paying child support. Tell them that they then will have an opportunity to ask questions about their legal rights and responsibilities as noncustodial fathers. Finally, they will get a chance to think ahead to when their circumstances allow them to provide better care for their children.

Paying Child Support

Purpose: To help fathers explore what gets in the way of their ability to provide financially for their children. To help fathers understand how their children can benefit from regular, consistent child support.

Materials: Handout, "Should I Pay Child Support?"; pencils (for everyone).

Time: 20-30 minutes.

Planning Note: This activity helps the fathers deal directly with the various reasons given for not paying support, particularly through the legal Child Support Enforcement system. Before doing this activity, read the Leader Resource "Facts About Child Support and Paternity" (in Activity 6-3) to familiarize yourself with all the ways in which a child and a father can benefit from his paying child support.Use this information to help those "debate partners" who must defend paying support.

Procedure: Begin by saying something like, "In the last session, we talked about what it takes to be a good father, and what gets in the way of his efforts to provide for his children. One question we discussed was whether or not you think a father's ability or decision to pay child support makes him a good candidate for the Father of the Year Award. In this activity, we will examine a father's responsibilities as a provider for his children."

Tell the men that the activity will explore their opinions about various reasons that fathers give for *not* paying child support. Ask whether anyone has ever been involved in a debate; if so, ask that member to describe how a debate works. (Be sure that the discussion includes that one person in a debate first states all the reasons he can think of to support his position, and then his debating partner presents all the reasons to argue against or oppose the first man's position.) Tell the men that they will debate about issues related to child support. Then distribute the handout "Should I Pay Child Support?" and a pencil to each participant.

Say something like, "The handout lists a variety of reasons that people give for why they should not be legally responsible for paying child support (through the Child Support Enforcement agency). As I read each statement, put a check mark next to the ones that you would like to defend. You can pick statements that represent your personal opinion or statements that you have heard other noncustodial parents make and would like to defend. When we begin the debates, anyone who disagrees with the statements you've chosen can volunteer to be your debate partner." Tell the men that the debates will reveal strong differences of opinion, but that this is OK.

After reading all the statements aloud (and reminding the men to put check marks on their handouts), tell the men that they will now have three or four debates, lasting five minutes each. Ask for a volunteer to defend one statement on the list; when he has read that statement aloud, ask for a volunteer to be his debate partner and argue against the statement. If more than one person wants to debate the same statement, suggest that the men form teams, but inform them that only one man can speak for each team. Tell them to pick a team member who has strong feelings about the issue to speak for them. Begin each debate with a one-minute defense of the statement, followed by a one-minute rebuttal; then alternate arguing the two positions until the time is up. Ask for a volunteer to be the timekeeper, to keep the debate moving.

After each debate, discuss question 1 below. When at least three statements have been debated, discuss the remaining questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Now that you have heard the debate, what do you believe about the statement? Should the father in this situation have to pay child support? Why or why not?
2. Under what circumstances, if any, do you think a father should be excused from paying child support?
3. What does it mean to be a provider for your children?
4. Why do some men pay child support while others do not?
5. Does a father's relationship with his children change when he can't pay child support? If so, how? Does his relationship with the child's mother change as well? How?
6. In what ways is a child's life affected when the father does not pay child support? How do you think a child benefits when a father does support his child regularly?
7. When you were a child, were you supported financially by your father? What was that experience like?
8. What is it like for you when you can't support your children?
9. What plans do you have to support your children in the future?
10. What can fathers do if they believe that:
    - the amount of their child support is too high?
    - they are not able to see their children?
    - their children are in danger or are not being cared for adequately?

Should I Pay Child Support?

Please put a check mark next to the statements you are willing to defend.

☐ **1.** Fathers who are not allowed to see their children should not have to pay child support.

☐ **2.** Fathers should not have to pay child support if their payment goes to the welfare department and not to the child.

☐ **3.** A man should not have to pay child support if he does not believe that he is the child's father.

☐ **4.** A father should not be forced to pay child support if he knows that the mother is using the money for herself.

☐ **5.** Fathers who do not have jobs should not be held responsible for child support payments.

☐ **6.** A man has the right to decide how much he can afford to pay in child support. If he is not given this right, he should not have to pay.

☐ **7.** A father's responsibility for child support should end when his child's mother remarries.

☐ **8.** It is more important for a father to spend time with his child than to pay child support.

☐ **9.** A father's responsibility for child support should end when he has a new family.

☐ **10.** A father should not have to pay child support when his child's mother makes enough money to support the child herself.

(Continued on page 9)

☐ 11. A father should not have to pay child support for a child who lives in another state.

☐ 12. A father should not have to pay child support for a child he did not want in the first place.

☐ 13. A father should not have to pay child support if the mother of his children is not also required to work to support her children.

☐ 14. A father who is a good provider should give money and things directly to the mother (or to his children), not to the child support system.

☐ 15. Being mandated to pay child support destroys a father's relationship with his children.

☐ 16. Fathers who don't have jobs should not have to go to jail if they cannot pay child support.

☐ 17. A father should not pay child support if he does *not* have a support order or a court order.

Rights and Responsibilities

Purpose: To increase participants' knowledge of child support policies and procedures. To help fathers understand their legal rights and responsibilities as noncustodial parents.

Materials: Leader Resource, "Facts About Child Support and Paternity"; Handout, "Questions for the Experts"; newsprint and markers.

Time: 35-45 minutes.

Planning Note: The goals of this activity are (1) to identify and explore participants' questions and concerns about paternity establishment and child support and (2) to inform them of their legal rights and responsibilities as noncustodial fathers. To answer specific questions about child support and paternity, it may be helpful to bring in a legal rights attorney with expertise in child support matters and/or a staff person from the Child Support Enforcement agency. Before inviting the guest speakers to the group, help the men list the questions or concerns they want to discuss. (See the handout "Questions for the Experts" for a variety of questions the group may want to ask.) Preparing a list will help the men clarify their questions and will let the presenters tailor their presentations to the needs of the group. Some fathers may have negative and hostile feelings about the Child Support Enforcement system, so you might remind the group to be courteous and discourage anyone from using this meeting to negotiate and resolve specific cases. (No one should see this as an opportunity to request an adjustment in his individual child support order; instead, the man can ask general questions about the procedures to request reductions.) You may want to prepare one or two volunteers to host the meeting, introducing the guests and facilitating the questions and answers.

If you choose *not* to use an outside presenter, be sure to review the Leader Resource "Facts About Child Support and Paternity" and the handout "Questions for the Experts" so that you can prepare to answer the men's questions. In addition, contact your local Child Support Enforcement agency to request any literature that explains the child support procedures in your state or locality. The Leader Resource includes a list of resources to which noncustodial fathers can turn for free or low-cost legal advice and/or representation. It is important to identify local resources before conducting this activity and, if possible, to prepare a list of the addresses and phone numbers of these resources to distribute to the men.

Procedure: Begin by reminding the fathers that this activity will address their questions and concerns about child support and paternity. If you have invited outside presenters (either a legal rights attorney or a representative from the Child Support Enforcement agency), welcome your guests and introduce them to the group. Then ask each father to introduce himself and to state the names and ages of his children. In your own words, tell the men why you have invited the speakers. Say something like, “We've spent a lot of time talking about your roles as fathers and providers, and one big part of being a provider for your children is paying child support. Today we have an opportunity to ask questions about establishing paternity, paying child support, getting visitation or custody, changing child support orders, etc. Our guest speakers are knowledgeable about the Child Support Enforcement system and about your legal rights as noncustodial fathers, and they can address your questions and concerns about such issues. We will start by asking the list of questions we prepared on the handout ‘Questions for the Experts.’ Then each of you will have a chance to ask any other questions that you have.”

Concluding the Activity. Be sure to leave at least 10 minutes at the end of this activity to allow participants to ask any questions that are not included on the handout “Questions for the Experts.” When everyone has had an opportunity to ask questions, thank the presenters and ask them for suggestions about resources to contact if the men have questions in the future. Remind the men that the more consistent and regular they are about paying child support and visiting their children, the more credibility they will have with their children, their children's mothers, the Child Support Enforcement agency, and each other.

Leader Resource

Facts About Child Support and Paternity

Establishing Paternity[1]

"Establishing paternity" refers to the legal process that parents must go through to identify the father of a child who is born to an unmarried woman.

Benefits to the Father

- Providing emotional and financial stability for the child.
- A legal say in what happens to the child (for example, if the mother wants to move to another state, place the baby for adoption, or is not a fit caretaker).
- The legal right to seek joint or full custody of the child.
- Some legal rights (not tied to paying) to see the child according to a visitation plan worked out by the court or appropriate administrative agency.

Benefits to the Child

- A sense of security and identity that comes from having a relationship with one's father.
- The emotional advantages of having an adult male role model.
- Being able to identify with other members of the father's family.
- Access to the father's medical history.
- Legal rights and privileges relating to the father's medical and life insurance plans, Social Security and veteran's benefits, and inheritance (property).
- The stability of financial support from both parents.

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1. *Paternity* means fatherhood.

Procedures for Establishing Paternity

Under federal law, paternity can be established until a child is 18. Either the custodial parent can file a paternity complaint against the alleged father, or the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) or welfare agency can file the complaint on the noncustodial parent's behalf. The complaint is then adjudicated in one of several ways. Some states establish paternity through the courts, while others may use administrative hearing officers. States that do not use the courts to establish paternity generally have a system by which all agreements are legally binding. In most states, fathers cannot receive free legal advice or representation for paternity suits. In order to find out more about this process, contact your state's CSE agency.

Default Judgment. If a father has been notified about the paternity hearing and does not respond or show up, paternity can be established by default (called a *default judgment*). At this time, a support order can also be issued.

Consent Agreement. If the father wants to establish paternity, he can sign a consent agreement that, along with other procedures, makes him the legal father. At this time a support order is usually set.

Genetic Testing. Under federal law, if either party contests paternity (denies that the man is the father), the court must allow a genetic test in order to prove or disprove paternity. Two kinds of genetic tests may be used:

- A *blood test* using blood samples of the mother, child, and alleged father to compare similar parts of the red blood cells and serum protein to determine which genetic markers, if any, the alleged father has in common with the child. (Genetic markers are specific and do not change with time and, therefore, may be used objectively to rule out any man who is not the father.)
- A new type of *DNA test* to analyze the DNA of the mother, child, and alleged father. This test has an accuracy rate of 99 percent in determining whether the man is the biological father.

The cost of each test is between $500 and $600 (the newer test is slightly more expensive). In some states the father may be held responsible for the cost of the test if it proves his paternity. A father who is a noncustodial parent may also file for paternity. If a man questions that he is the father, he should request genetic testing *before* establishment of paternity.

Locating Absent Parents[2]

The Obligation of the Mother in the Location Effort

An unmarried mother who applies for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF; previously known as AFDC) is required by law to name the father of her children. She will also be asked to give his Social Security number, the names and addresses of his current or recent employers, and the names of his friends and relatives. Any information given to the CSE caseworker will be used to locate the father in an effort to establish paternity. If the custodial parent does not cooperate, her TANF benefits can be reduced or suspended.

State and Federal Parent Locator Services

If a father is employed, has credit in his name, has a driver's license or Social Security number, is in the armed forces, or receives any kind of government benefits, he can usually be located. The State Parent Locator Service (SPLS) can check records of state agencies, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles. The SPLS can also check Unemployment Insurance filings, state income tax refunds, and jails to find out where the father works and lives. If the absent parent cannot be found in the state, the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) can search the records of the Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Defense, the Social Security Administration, and the Veterans Administration.

The CSE agency may try to locate absent parents for one of several reasons: to notify them if a paternity complaint has been filed and they need to come to court or an administrative hearing concerning the complaint; to either collect on an already established support order or begin withholding the order from parents' paychecks or tax refunds; and/or to review and modify the amount of the child support order.

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[2] *Absent parent* means the parent who does not live with or have custody of the child but does have responsibility for financial support.

Setting Child Support Orders

The Amount of Orders

Each state has guidelines tied to the resources and circumstances of parents to set child support orders. Judges or administrative hearings officers are obliged to use their state's guidelines in setting child support orders unless they feel that circumstances of a particular case make the guidelines unjust or inappropriate. These circumstances vary from state to state. To find out which guidelines your state uses in setting child support orders — and exceptions that judges can make to these guidelines — contact your local CSE agency.

Although the exact formulas used in child support guidelines vary, all take into account:

- The income of the noncustodial parent
- The employment status of the noncustodial parent
- The income of the custodial parent
- The number of children of the noncustodial parent
- The support needs of the children
- The past payment history of the noncustodial parent

Most states require that the noncustodial parent pay child support until the child is 18. Some states continue child support until the child is out of high school or college.[3] In some states the noncustodial parent must petition the court to stop a child support order when a child reaches 18.

Modifications of the Order

If a noncustodial parent loses his job, or if his financial situation changes drastically, he can request a review of the order amount by filing a petition at the CSE office or court, which can lead to a hearing and possible adjustment of the order. In some states a filing fee may be required.

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[3] If the child has physical or mental disabilities, a father's obligation to pay child support may extend past the usual state requirements.

Paying Child Support

Child support payments will be withheld from the noncustodial parent's paycheck as a result of an income deduction order approved by the court or administrative agency for child support. Beginning in November 1990, this was required for all new or modified child support orders in cases where the noncustodial parent's children were receiving TANF. Wage withholding is also mandatory for those orders set before November 1, 1990, if an arrearage occurs equal to one month's support. Beginning January 1, 1994, support will be withheld from the noncustodial parent's paycheck regardless of whether he is on welfare.

The noncustodial parent should be encouraged to begin to make voluntary payments before the enforcement of the income deduction order. In this case, the noncustodial parent should be advised to keep all receipts of support payments made to the custodial parent. When making payments, the noncustodial parent should apply for an obligor or payee number to ensure that he receives proper credit for payments made.

$50 Pass-Through in TANF Cases

When a custodial parent receives TANF, the first $50 of child support paid by the noncustodial parent goes to the custodial parent without a decrease in her TANF payment, and the rest of the money is used to reimburse the state for TANF benefits that are paid out to the custodial parent.

States have different methods of enforcing payment of child support. A noncustodial parent's failure to comply with any child support order may result in the seizure of his:

- State and/or federal income tax refund
- Bank account funds
- Possessions (for example, motorcycles, etc.)
- Money from unemployment or disability income
- Driver's license

Also, noncustodial parents may have their names published in a local newspaper or other public record.

If noncustodial parents cannot pay because of unemployment, some states make them document their efforts to find work.[4] Failure to pay can lead to incarceration.

Noncustodial parents who pay child support regularly do not have a right to specify how the custodial parent uses the child support money. However, if a father knows or suspects that the mother of his children is spending the money on drugs, and/or that she abuses or neglects the children, he can take the following steps:

- He can sue for custody if he has evidence that the mother is incapable of caring for the children and if he wants the children to live with him.
- If he is not prepared to take custody of his children but he feels that they are in a dangerous situation (e.g., the mother is using drugs), he can call the Child Welfare Office, which will investigate. If there is evidence that the children are being abused or neglected, they will be removed to be placed with relatives or in foster care. Sometimes the mother will be able to get the help she needs and the children will be allowed to live with her again when she is better able to care for them.

Visitation

When paternity is established, the noncustodial parent is usually granted the right to visit his children. Visitation rights are not connected to child support payments. If the noncustodial parent is not paying child support, he still has visitation rights. Likewise, if the custodial parent refuses to let the noncustodial parent visit the child, the noncustodial parent still has an obligation to pay child support.

Visitation orders can include specific instructions about the amount of time the noncustodial parent can spend with his children, or the instructions can be vague, granting the noncustodial parent "reasonable rights of visitation" or "visitation to be decided by both parties." Nonspecific visitation orders leave it to the parents to agree on what constitutes "reasonable visitation."

If the noncustodial parent is denied visitation rights by the custodial parent, he can file a complaint with the court or appropriate administrative agency. If the judge or hearing officer agrees that the noncustodial parent is being denied visitation, the custodial parent can be held in contempt of court or of the administrative agency.

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[4] Some states will suspend child support payments while the noncustodial parent is looking for work.

Noncustodial parents can also try to enter mediation with the custodial parents. This may be more effective and helpful than working through the courts.

Arrearages

Noncustodial parents are sometimes also obligated to make payments on child support debts known as *arrearages*. Typically, when a noncustodial parent pays regular child support through an income deduction order, a percentage of the custodial parent's wages will also be withheld to pay money toward arrearages. Each state has regulations about how arrearages are calculated. There are two general types of arrearages: money owed for child support and money owed for the TANF payments (previously AFDC) that the state is making to the custodial parent and her children.

Debts from Child Support

- **Uncollected child support before TANF application.** In some states, an arrearage can be from uncollected child support owed before TANF. When custodial parents apply for TANF, they assign to the state the right to collect child support. If they had a legal support order in place before applying for TANF and if the noncustodial parent owed money on this order, the right to collect the back support is assigned to the state at the time of TANF application.
- **Unpaid child support during TANF receipt.** If the custodial parent is receiving TANF and the noncustodial parent does not pay child support to the state (or does not pay the whole amount of the order), the unpaid balance becomes an arrearage debt.

Debts to the State for the TANF Payments Made to the Custodial Parent

- **TANF support debts.** In some states, noncustodial parents may be held responsible for any money that the state is paying to the custodial parent for TANF not covered by the custodial parent's child support order; this amount may become the noncustodial parent's debt as well.
- **Pre-support order costs.** Noncustodial parents can also accrue debt from before the child support order was set. In some states, the noncustodial parent may be held responsible for the costs of TANF and hospital "confinement" expenses due before the date of the child support order.

Legal Advice

It may be difficult for the men to get free legal advice about their cases. Facilitators should do some research in their communities about where the fathers can get legal advice. Some places to check are:

- **Legal Aid Societies/Legal Assistance Services.** In some jurisdictions, these organizations may represent the men or provide free legal advice.
- **The County Bar Association.** The County Bar Association is a professional organization made up of private attorneys. These groups sometimes offer free legal advice clinics or have attorneys who volunteer to take pro-bono cases.
- **Local family court.** The local family court may know what kinds of state committees and organizations in the area offer legal advice to noncustodial parents.
- **The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).** Although the ACLU does not specifically work with noncustodial parents, it often knows which groups are active in the area. The ACLU can be a good source of referrals.

Questions for the Experts

1. What does *paternity* mean, and how and when is it established?
2. What kinds of tests are used to prove paternity, and how accurate are they?
3. How much do these tests cost, and who pays for them?
4. How do fathers and children benefit when paternity is established?
5. What happens to fathers who refuse to establish paternity?
6. What happens if the mother refuses to acknowledge the father of her child?
7. What are the ways in which the court or child support agency goes about finding absent fathers?
8. Once paternity is established, how are orders for child support set?
9. What is the judge or hearing officer going to want to know about a noncustodial father when he appears in court for a child support order?
10. How is the amount of child support owed by the noncustodial father decided?
11. If a father's financial situation changes, how can he go about getting an adjustment in his child support order?
12. If a noncustodial father has never paid child support, how much previous support will he be responsible for?
13. If a noncustodial father has paid money to his children's mother directly, can he receive credit for the amount of support previously paid?
14. If his children's mother is on TANF, why should a noncustodial father have to pay child support?
15. If his children are on TANF, how much of his child support money will the children's mother actually receive (that is, what happens to the rest of his support money)?
16. If a noncustodial father lives in another town, city, or state, is he still expected to pay child support? If so, how is his support collected?

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17. Why does money for child support come out of a father's paycheck when he gets a job? What happens when he changes jobs?
18. If a noncustodial father cannot or will not pay child support, does he still have the right to visit his children?
19. What happens when a noncustodial father refuses to pay child support?
20. If a noncustodial father later marries and has other children, is he still responsible for supporting his first child?
21. If a noncustodial father's children go into foster care, will he still be expected to pay child support?
22. If a noncustodial father receives unemployment or disability benefits, is he still required to pay child support?
23. What happens to mothers on TANF who refuse to cooperate in establishing paternity or locating absent fathers?
24. If the children's mother marries someone with a good income, is the noncustodial father still responsible for child support?
25. Can a noncustodial father pay support directly to the mother of his children? If not, why not?
26. What happens when a father's children have different mothers? Is he responsible for paying support for all the children? How is the amount decided? If not all the children are on TANF, what happens?
27. When does a father's responsibility for supporting his children end?
28. How much say does a noncustodial father have about how the mother of his children spends the support money she receives?
29. What can a father do if he is concerned about the care and well-being of his children?
30. Where can a noncustodial father get free or low-cost legal advice and/or representation if he wants to sue for custody?
31. If a father has custody of his children, what financial responsibility will the mother have to her children?
32. If the mother of his children is not working (or doing anything constructive with her life), why should a noncustodial father be solely responsible for paying child support?

Feedback/Wrap-up

At the end of this session, the men may still have concerns about having to pay child support, in addition to anger and resentment toward the mothers of their children. Encourage them to express any negative feelings or opinions, but help them to make a distinction between how they feel about the child's mother or the "system" and what they say they want for their children. Be sure to emphasize how children benefit from regular child support and from strong relationships with their fathers. Remind them of what they have said they want for their children and of how they hope to improve their lives in the future. In your own words, use the following questions to discuss the men's reactions to this session about child support.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Does anyone want to describe his reactions to today's session? What are your thoughts or feelings?
2. Did you learn anything new about your rights and responsibilities as a noncustodial parent? If so, what did you learn?
3. What suggestions do you have for fathers who resent having to pay child support or who are angry at their child's mother?
4. What, if anything, do you plan to do with today's information? (For example, will you attempt to establish paternity, or will you request visitation rights, etc.?)

Tell the men that the next few sessions (7, 8, and 9) will focus on the needs of their children. Say something like, "In the next session, you will examine what you value as parents and how you can help your children develop values to guide their lives. Then we will talk about the challenges you face when you are caring for your children, including how to deal with their troublesome behavior. Throughout these sessions, we will be looking for ways to build strong relationships between you and your children."

Session 7

Developing Values in Children

Activity **7-1**	**What's New?**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **7-2**	**My Life as a Father**	☞ **15-20 minutes**
Activity **7-3**	**The Values Auction**	☞ **30-40 minutes**
Activity **7-4**	**Communicating Values**	☞ **25-30 minutes**
Activity **7-5**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Key Concepts

- Children begin to develop values (important beliefs or principles that guide behavior) from the moment they are born. Children learn what other people think is right and wrong by watching and imitating their parents and other caregivers and by having their behavior corrected when they do not act in accordance with their parents' and caregivers' values.
- Fathers need to identify the values that they want to pass on to their children in order to develop effective strategies for communicating their values.
- There is no one single "right" way of parenting, and every child is different. Parents who successfully communicate values to their children are likely to develop a solid relationship with them based on love and trust.

Materials Checklist

Activity 7-2 My Life as a Father

☐ Newsprint

☐ Marker

Activity 7-3 The Values Auction

☐ Leader Resource, "Childhood Behaviors" (on newsprint)

☐ Play money

☐ Newsprint

☐ Marker

Activity 7-4 Communicating Values

☐ Leader Resources, "Communicating Values" and "Moral Development of Children"

☐ Index cards

What's New?

Planning Note: Fathers who do not see their children regularly or who are estranged from them may have difficulty participating in Sessions 7 through 9 (especially if they are mandated to pay child support, but have no access to their children). It will be important to find ways for everyone to participate and learn from each other. Try to balance discussions of general issues with the more specific concerns that the fathers want to share with the group regarding their children. Since one goal of peer support is to help fathers develop healthy relationships with their children, look for and encourage opportunities for the men to assist each other in connecting with their children.

Begin the activity by asking participants what they thought about the last session. In your own words, ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would somebody like to summarize what we talked about last session?
2. What were your reactions to our discussion about being a father? About being a provider?
3. Has anyone's opinions about paying child support changed because of our discussion? If so, what has changed?
4. Have you had any new ideas about how to deal with the things (or people) that get in the way of providing for your children? If so, what are your ideas?
5. What questions about child support or establishing paternity do you still have? How do you suggest we go about answering them?
6. What, if anything, about the last session did you discuss with your partner, friends, or family?

My Life as a Father

Purpose: To encourage the participants to talk about how things are going for them right now as fathers. To identify the fathers' concerns about their children that can be addressed in the next two sessions.

Materials: Newsprint and marker.

Time: 10-15 minutes.

Procedure: Begin by saying something like, "So far, you've talked about what you value as individuals and what experiences have shaped your view of yourselves as men and fathers. You have also worked at improving your communication skills, and you have talked about the characteristics of being a good father and provider for your children. Many of our discussions have focused in your role as fathers and on your relationships with your children. The next few sessions will direct out attention to the children themselves — to what they need from fathers to grow up feeling good about themselves and to be productive in their lives. Today you will identify what you value as a parent and which values you want to communicate to your children as you respond to the situations in their lives. Whenever you interact with your children, you communicate certain values and messages about how you feel about them and about how they should feel about themselves. The goal is to send the best messages you can."

Tell the men, "To begin, I would like each of you to remind the group of how many children you have and your children's names and ages. Also tell us something that you like about your children, and any characteristics they have that you feel you had a hand in shaping. For example, if your child is honest, what have you done to encourage that quality? Finally, tell the group how much time you spend with your children and how you feel about that. This is also an opportunity to ask for advice about any particular problem or concern you may have about your children right now."

Remind the group that not all the fathers are in contact with their children, and so the men should be supportive of members who may be upset by the session or who may have a hard time participating in it. Assure those who are estranged from their children that they can benefit from the other fathers' experiences and that, at the same time, the group may be helpful in their efforts to connect with their children.

Then ask each father to give the following information. (Post the list on newsprint for all to see.)

- The names and ages of your children.
- What you like about your children. (For example, your son's or daughter's personality, humor, intelligence, etc.)
- Characteristics or qualities that you helped your children develop. (For example, independence, persistence, honesty, etc.)
- How often you see your children.
- How satisfied you are with the amount of time you spend with your children.
- A concern or problem you may be having with your children.
- For fathers who are not be in contact with their children, what steps, if any, do you plan to take to establish visits?

As the fathers share this information, record their responses on newsprint; in particular, record their concerns about their children.

When everyone has finished, tell the men that you will try to address all their concerns during this session and the next two. As a starting point, the next activity will help them to identify the behaviors and characteristics that they value in their children — and what they can do as fathers to encourage these characteristics.

The Values Auction

Purpose: To assist participants in identifying the values, behaviors, and characteristics that they want to nurture in their children.

Materials: Leader Resource, “Childhood Behaviors” (on newsprint); play money; newsprint and marker.

Time: [illegible]-40 minutes.

Planning Note: This activity is a fun way to get the fathers thinking about which values are important to them and which kinds of behaviors they would like to promote in their children. Because play money is used, this activity often gets highly competitive and raucous. It is important to reserve at least 15 minutes after the activity to reflect on (1) which behaviors the men “bought” and why these things are important to them, (2) the *values* that underlie the behaviors they want to manage or encourage in their children, and (3) their ideas about how they need to interact with their children to promote the development of these values. This activity will give the fathers an opportunity to think about who their children are as individuals — and about the important role they can play in influencing their children’s development.

The Leader Resource “Childhood Behaviors” lists 35 possibilities. Depending on the size of your group, select 20 to 25 statements. The goal is to have enough statements so that each participant can select from one to three behaviors. With too many choices, the auction may take too long; but you also do not want to run out of choices before participants have “spent” their money. If possible, add statements that may be more relevant to your group.

Post the following statement on newsprint: “I value ________, and I want my child to value it.”

Procedure: Begin by saying, "One of the most important things you can give your children is a set of values and beliefs to help shape the kind of people they become. Good parenting starts with knowing what you as a father value in your relationship with your child, followed by how you treat the child in order to communicate those values. This activity will ask you to think about how you want your child to turn out. Which values, behaviors, and characteristics do you as a father want to develop in your child?"

Ask the fathers to define "values." (If necessary, remind them of their work in Session 2, explaining that a value is something that you believe in, is important to you, and often guides your behavior.) Ask the fathers to call out examples of values (such as honesty, loyalty, respect for others). Then ask them to complete the statement, "I value ________, and I want my child to value it." Write all their responses on the newsprint you prepared, and save it for use after the values auction.

Describe an auction and how it works. Then give each participant $300 in play money and tell the men to look over the list of behaviors and characteristics that you posted on the newsprint; they should decide which values they would like to "buy" for their children. Explain that they may bid as much as $300 or as little as $20 for each value and that the father with the highest bid "buys" that value for his child.

Serve as the auctioneer and timekeeper, giving the men one minute to bid for each behavior. When the time is up, the father with the highest bid wins that item (write his name and the winning bid next to that item). Read aloud in a positive manner each behavior. If your group is small, limit the number of values to the ones most important to your group (thus ensuring that the fathers will buy only the values that are truly important to them).

After you have auctioned off all items on the list (or after everybody has spent his play money), point out the contradictions and relationships between certain behaviors and characteristics. For instance, some fathers may buy "A child who is successful in school" but not "A child who is curious and asks many questions." Asking the group how one behavior or characteristic can influence another enables them to think more critically about how their children are growing and learning.

Then ask the participants to consider each behavior and characteristic and to identify its underlying *value*; record their responses on the newsprint next to each item. Also ask them to distinguish between characteristics that are basically part of a person's *personality* and characteristics that can be developed by a parent's encouragement and expectations. (For example, having a sense of humor is often characteristic of a person's personality, something that a parent can influence only marginally, whereas feeling good about oneself or having high self-esteem is a characteristic greatly influenced by how a parent feels about and treats the child.)

Continue the discussion by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Why did you buy a particular behavior or characteristic?
2. Which were the three "best-selling" behaviors or characteristics? Why do you think so many of you chose these?
3. Which behaviors or characteristics went unsold? Why do you think these were not chosen?
4. Do any of the behaviors or characteristics that you bought contradict each other?
5. Would your selections change depending on whether you were buying values for a son or for a daughter? If so, how would they change, and why?

6. How does a child develop a "personality"? How much does the way parents raise a child contribute to his or her personality? (For example, does a parent's treatment of the child influence such characteristics as being strong-willed, affectionate, or independent?)
7. Which of *your* personality traits do you see in your child? Do you tend to encourage (or discourage) these traits? How do you do this?
8. What things can you do to encourage your child to develop the characteristics and behaviors that you value? How likely is it that you will be successful?
9. Which behaviors would you like to buy that are not on the list?
10. Which of the behaviors on the list would have been valued by your father when you were a child?
11. Which of these characteristics did you display as a child?
12. How did your parents respond to you when you displayed behavior that they valued? How did they respond when you displayed behavior they didn't value?
13. How did you feel when your parents responded to your behavior? How did their response influence or shape the kind of person you have become?

Leader Resource

Childhood Behaviors

1. A child who is loyal to me at all times.
2. A child whose feelings are never hurt.
3. A child who is curious and asks many questions.
4. A child who always listens to me.
5. A child who never talks back.
6. A child who feels comfortable telling me everything he or she is feeling.
7. A child who has many friends.
8. A child who can control his or her temper.
9. A child who stands up for himself or herself, even if it means fighting.
10. A child who is a leader, not a follower.
11. A child who looks good.
12. A child more like me than like his or her mother.
13. A child who is successful in school.
14. A child who is physically fit and healthy.
15. A child who will follow my religious beliefs.
16. A child who is respectful of me and other adults.
17. A child who feels good about himself or herself.
18. A child who is honest.
19. A child who is good at sports.
20. A child who is affectionate.
21. A child who is strong-willed and purposeful.
22. A child who always feels free to approach me with problems.

23. A child who is street-smart.

24. A child who enjoys spending time with me, even when he or she doesn't have a problem or need financial assistance.

25. A child who is easygoing and flexible.

26. A child whose behavior makes me feel proud.

27. A child who can take care of himself or herself.

28. A child with a good sense of humor.

29. A child who stands up for his or her beliefs.

30. A child who is adventuresome and daring.

31. A child who never fears or hates me.

32. A child who is popular in school.

33. A child who has a lot of hobbies.

34. A child who is interested in his or her culture.

35. A child who is self-disciplined.

Communicating Values

Purpose: To identify and practice positive ways of communicating values to children within daily situations.

Materials: Leader Resources, "Communicating Values" and "Moral Development of Children"; index cards.

Time: 25-30 minutes.

Planning Note: The facilitator should write the information from the Leader Resource "Communicating Values" onto index cards, putting each scenario on a separate card. Also review the Leader Resource "Moral Development of Children" before the activity so you can provide information to answer question 6.

Procedure: Begin by saying something like, "You have just identified the values that you feel are important to pass on to your children. Now we need to figure out what you can do to communicate these values to them." Remind the fathers that children learn by observing and listening to their parents. What parents do is as important as what they say — and sometimes it is even more important.

Tell participants that you have several situations (or scenarios) that you want them to consider. Each situation describes an opportunity for the parent to communicate something about values. Remind the men that a value might be some characteristic they believe in (such as honesty or respect for elders); it might be an attitude (such as that the human body is natural and beautiful); or it might be a guideline for behavior (such as the idea that it is good to share).

Divide the fathers into small groups, and give each group an index card describing a scenario. The scenarios involve children whose ages range from 2 to 17. In composing small groups, try to team up fathers whose children's ages match the scenarios. This will give the men an opportunity to brainstorm ways to handle situations that are likely to arise with their own children.

After each group reads its scenario, have the group discuss the following questions:

- What's going on here?
- What do you want your child to understand and learn?
- What would you do to communicate this? (Keep in mind the child's age and level of development.)

Allow approximately 10 minutes for the small-group discussions. Then have each group read its scenario and responses. After all groups have shared their responses, open up a large-group discussion by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What values might be communicated in each situation? (In situation 1, the issue is self-defense and fighting: Is it OK to defend oneself when attacked, or to hurt another person who "messes" with you? In situation 2, the issue is acceptable social behavior, and situation 3 involves acceptable behavior for boys. In situation 7, the issue is being comfortable with your sexuality and your body.)
2. In situation 4, how might the actions of the adults influence the child's use of profanity?
3. In situation 4, how might the father handle his two-year-old daughter's swearing? (Sample responses: Tell her firmly that she should not say "shit," but don't give her too much attention. She is probably using the word because she knows it gets a reaction. The father should be careful about his own language, because she will imitate him.)
4. In situation 8, what might be going on with 10-year-old Jernisha? (Sample responses: She may be having a hard time adjusting to the new school. She may not feel good enough about herself to say no to peer pressure. She may be lonely and want friends, regardless of what they are like.)
5. Have any similar situations involving values come up with your own children? If so, how do you handle them?
6. At what age would you expect your children to accept and practice the values you've taught them? (See the Leader Resource "Moral Development of Children.")
7. Was there a time in your childhood when you realized that you were acting in a way that represented your parents' values? If so, how old were you? What was the experience like?
8. Was there a time in your childhood when you acted in a way that opposed a belief or value that was important to your parents? How old were you?
9. Have situations occurred with your child's mother, grandmother, teachers, etc., where your values differed from theirs? If so, how do you handle this? (For example, what do you do if you feel strongly that children should not be hit, yet other caregivers believe in spanking or hitting children as a form of discipline?)

Leader Resource

Communicating Values

SITUATION 1: Your son, Paul, is five years old and has been fighting at his Head Start program. His mother has told him not to fight, but he just keeps doing it. Paul says that the other kids mess with him, so he fights back. What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 2: Your three-year-old, Michelle, has started to stick out her tongue at people and to throw food at the dinner table when she visits you. You find out from her mother that there are some "wild kids" at the babysitter's who behave this way. Today, you and your buddy Keenan have taken Michelle to lunch at a fast-food restaurant. Michelle is laughing and having fun eating her french fries with lots of ketchup. You and Keenan start talking about a game you watched on TV last night, and suddenly Michelle throws a french fry at you and it lands right on your nose. Keenan bursts out laughing. What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 3: Your son, Akeem, is six years old and very lovable. He has a lot of friends because he is a fun kid to be around. He is also amazingly well coordinated for his age. He can catch a football and a baseball, and he's a fast runner. He's also a great dancer and can imitate most of his favorite rap stars on TV. Akeem goes to the Roots Early Childhood Center, a private school in his community. His grandmother pays the tuition. The dance teacher at Roots, Ms. Johnson, is so impressed with Akeem that she wants him to take some classes that include lessons in ballet, tap, and basic jazz steps. Ms. Johnson thinks Akeem could end up dancing with the Alvin Ailey Company. Akeem's mother and grandmother are all for it. What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 4: Your two-year-old, Courtney, has started saying the word "shit" from time to time. Often people laugh at her because she sounds so funny cursing. You know that she has heard you and her mother use profanity. Today, Courtney is at your house playing with some blocks. When they tumble over, Courtney says, "Shit!" What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 5: You see your four-year-old, Jason, go into the closet and take money from your jacket pocket. When Jason approaches you, he has the money in his hand. You ask him where he got the money, and he responds by shrugging his shoulders. What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 6: Your two-year-old, Shenika, is playing with a three-year-old cousin. Her cousin tries to get her to play a game of catch, but Shenika pulls the ball away and says, "It's my ball; you can't touch it!" Shenika makes it clear that she doesn't want to share her ball with anyone. What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 7: Your four-year-old daughter, Marquetta, is spending the weekend with you. She wanders into your bedroom as you get out of the shower. She smiles at you, looks right at your penis, and says, "Daddy, is that your penis?" You nod yes. Marquetta asks, "Why don't I have a penis?" What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 8: Jernisha, your 10-year-old daughter, is an honor student and has transferred to a new school. A month after getting to this school, she starts hanging out with some older students who cut classes and who smoke outside of school. You get a call from Jernisha's mother, saying that your daughter's grades have begun to fall. What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 9: Your 13-year-old daughter, Tammy, has been living with you for about six months. When she came to your house, you laid down some rules about how you want her to dress. You also told her that she cannot wear makeup until she is 16 years old. One day, you visit Tammy at school and find her wearing makeup and dressed in a very skimpy outfit — not the clothes she was wearing when she left for school that morning. What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 10: Your 16-year-old son, Vince, borrowed his mother's car to take his girlfriend on a date. The next day, while looking for something in the back seat of the car, his mother finds a used condom. Before confronting Vince about the condom, his mother comes to you for advice and help. What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 11: Your 17-year-old son, Malcolm, comes to you for advice. His 15-year-old girlfriend, Phyllicia, is pregnant with his child. He asks, "What should I do, Dad? I mean, you got mom pregnant with me when I was your age." What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 12: Your 14-year-old daughter, Stephanie, comes for a weekend visit. When she opens her suitcase, you notice that it is filled with expensive clothes, all of them with the tags still on them. When you ask her where she got the clothes, she says, "Mom's boyfriend, Johnny, bought them for me." You've heard from others that Johnny is the neighborhood bookie. What do you think? What do you do?

SITUATION 13: Your 16-year-old son, Tony, comes home one day and tells you that he has become a born-again Christian (or Muslim). He denounces you for the way that you live, and he says that he is going to go live with his religious leader so that he can study the Bible (Koran). What do you think? What do you do?

Leader Resource

Moral Development of Children

A child's ability to learn right from wrong starts as early as two years old and continues beyond his or her teenage years. The process occurs slowly and at different rates for different children. When parents know what children of different ages are capable of, they can help guide their children's moral development.

AGES 2 TO 5: Children are "me"-focused; they begin to understand right and wrong, based on responses from parents (for example, child reacts to parent saying "good girl" or "bad girl"). When children receive love and attention in these early years, they will develop the capacity to care about others. Parents should begin to set limits, such as "No, don't hit," and should model good behavior, thereby setting the foundation for their children's moral development.

AGES 5 TO 7: Children understand right from wrong by the time they are five or six years old, yet their conscience is just beginning to form. Children of this age are also learning that they are part of a community; thus they enjoy helping others. Children often start to lie at this age, as well as to tattletale on others who do things wrong. Parents should encourage sharing, helping, honesty, fair play, good manners, etc. Also, enforce family rules, and explain why the rules are necessary (for example, "We don't hit, because it hurts").

AGES 8 TO 11: Children become more assertive; they have a very strict idea of what's right and wrong, stemming from a strong conscience. Children of this age are good because others will think well of them, yet may act "bad" to impress peers. They are now beginning to care about people in the world whom they don't know. Parents should show respect for their children and expect respect in return. Children need to be taught how to resolve conflicts through discussion and compromise. Parents can encourage their children to do volunteer or community work that helps others.

AGES 12 TO 18: The teenager has a real sense of what it means to be a good person, yet is beginning to question values of adults; teens continue to respect authority, but will begin to raise questions and challenge the way society is run. This is also a time when one's peers become more and more important. Parents should stay involved in their children's lives and at the same time support their children's attempts to sort out their own beliefs. Parents also need to allow their teens to rebel in safe ways (such as in style of dress, hair, political views, choice of music, etc.). This is an important time to openly discuss moral issues with teens.

References: Laura Sessions Stepp, "Raising a Moral Child," *Child* (December/January 1993); and James P. Comer and Alvin F. Poussaint, *Raising Black Children* (New York: Plume, 1992).

Feedback/Wrap-up

End this session by reviewing the Key Concepts about communicating values to children. Ask the following questions to discuss today's session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What is your overall reaction to today's session?
2. Which values are important enough to you that you want your children to have them, too?
3. How well do you think you are doing in your efforts to communicate and develop these values in your children? What, if anything, can you do differently?

Conclude by saying that in Session 8 the group will talk about how to handle children on a day-to-day basis, particularly when the fathers have full responsibility for their children's care. Say something like, "All that we talked about today sounds terrific, and yet all parents have trouble at times knowing what their children need at different stages of development. In the next sessions, we will learn what children need from parents at different ages, and how parents can best respond to children's needs."

Thank the men for their participation, and remind them of when the next session meets.

Coping as a Single Father

Activity **8-1**	**What's New?**	☞ 10-15 minutes
Activity **8-2**	Icebreaker: **What Every Parent Should Know**	☞ 10-15 minutes
Activity **8-3**	**Child Care Checklist**	☞ 25-35 minutes
Activity **8-4**	**Fathering on Weekends**	☞ 25-35 minutes
Activity **8-5**	**Making Visits Count**	☞ 20 minutes
Activity **8-6**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ 10-15 minutes

Key Concepts

- Single fathers who have part-time custody of their children should know their children's physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs. It's also important for them to know their children's daily routines in order to prevent disruptions in their children's lives.
- Fathers must acquire the skills to provide responsible care to their children. Parenting skill comes with experience and learning; it does not come naturally for either men or women.
- Children display specific behaviors and skills at different stages of development. When parents know what to expect from children at various ages, they will be better equipped to respond to their children's needs.
- Caring for children can be challenging and satisfying. Most single fathers have resources available to help them meet their child care needs. It is OK to ask for help.

Materials Checklist

Activity **8-2** What Every Parent Should Know

- ☐ Handout, "The Parent Quiz"
- ☐ Newsprint
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Pencils (for everyone)
- ☐ Index cards (optional)

Activity **8-3** Child Care Checklist

- ☐ Handouts, "Child Care Checklist" and "Child Care Questions"
- ☐ Pencils (for everyone)

Activity **8-4** Fathering on Weekends

- ☐ Handout, "Case Studies: Paul, Andrew, Marcus, and José" (copy for each small group)
- ☐ Leader Resource, "Case-Study Questions"
- ☐ Newsprint
- ☐ Marker

Activity 8-5 Making Visits Count

☐ Handout, "Fill-in-the-Blanks Story" (one for each small group)
☐ Pencils (one for each small group)
☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

What's New?

Begin by asking how the fathers are doing and whether they have any feedback about the last session. Remind them of the number of sessions still remaining, review briefly what they have done so far, and state which topics will be addressed later. This is a good time to ask for their overall reactions to peer support and to check whether there are any overriding issues or topics that they want to cover in the weeks ahead. Ask the following questions to discuss the last session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would somebody like to summarize what happened at the last session?
2. What reactions did you have to the last session?
3. What thoughts have you had this week about your role as a father?
4. Have any situations come up with your children where you realized that one of your values was being questioned? If so, what happened, and what did you do?

Say something like, "To continue our discussion of children's needs, today we will talk more specifically about the range of skills that fathers use in caring for their children — especially when they have full responsibility for the children's care whether full time, part time, or for short periods. Then we will focus on ways to improve the quality of your time with your children without spending a lot of money."

Introduce Activity 8-2 by telling the fathers that they are going to play a game to see how much information they have about their children.

Icebreaker **What Every Parent Should Know**

Purpose: To help the fathers identify important information that they should know about their children.

Materials: Handout, "The Parent Quiz"; pencils (for everyone); newsprint and markers; index cards (optional).

Time: 10-15 minutes.

Planning Note: This icebreaker asks the men to answer questions that test their knowledge of important information about their children. At the end of the quiz, the father who has either the most points or a certain number of points receives a prize. (To make this lively, try to offer fun prizes such as gift certificates to a fast-food restaurant or passes to a movie theater.) The point here is to test the fathers' knowledge about important factual information that they should know about their children. This icebreaker leads to Activity 8-3, "Child Care Checklist," which identifies specific skills that fathers need in order to help their children deal with issues at various ages and stages of development.

There are two ways to conduct the quiz:

1. Read aloud each question from "The Parent Quiz." Each correct answer earns one point, and the father with the most points at the end of the game wins the prize.
2. Write each question from "The Parent Quiz" on a separate index card. Divide the cards into two sets of equally difficult questions, and divide the group into two teams. The teams alternate asking each other questions from their index cards. Each team earns one point only if *all* its members can answer the question. The *team* with the most points at the end of the game wins the prizes.

When selecting questions for the quiz, choose 25 that seem most relevant to the fathers in your group. Add questions from the list the men brainstorm.

Procedure: Begin by saying that there are things which all parents — whether custodial or noncustodial — should know about their children. Ask the fathers to brainstorm a list of what some of these important things are, and record their ideas on newsprint. When the list is complete, tell the men they are going to play "The Parent Quiz." Depending on which version you decide to play (see the "Planning Note"), explain the procedure and prizes.

Before the first question is asked (whether by you or a team player), draw columns on a sheet of newsprint so that you can record points for each question. Move rapidly through at least 25 questions to keep the game lively. Be sure to add questions that the men have brainstormed earlier as well as questions of your own. When all the questions have been asked, tally the scores, and hand out prizes. Briefly discuss this activity by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How well did you do in answering questions about your children?
2. Which questions were hard? Which were easy?
3. Were any of you surprised about the information you knew (or didn't know) about your children? If so, what was surprising?
4. If you could not answer all the questions about your children, do you have any plans to find out this information? How do you hope to get the answers to these questions?
5. What other information about your children should you know? How might you get this information?

The Parent Quiz

1. What is each of your children's age and birth date, including year of birth?
2. Who is the doctor of your children, and which hospital do the children go to in an emergency?
3. Have your children had any childhood illnesses such as chicken pox, measles, or ear infections? If so, when?
4. For those of you with young children, which immunizations have the children had?
5. Do your children have any allergies? If so, what are they allergic to?
6. Do your children take any prescription medicines? If so, which medicines and how often?
7. If one of your children were missing, what information would the police need to help you find your child? Can you give accurate information to describe each of your children?
8. Do you have current pictures of your children? If not, what is the age of each child in the most recent picture you have? How old is each child now?
9. Do your children have any birthmarks? If so, describe them.
10. What grades are your children in?
11. When was the last time each of your children went to the dentist?
12. If you were packing an overnight bag to visit your children, what would you pack?
13. What schools do your children attend?
14. What religions, if any, do each of your children practice? Which sacraments, if any, have your children received?
15. What is the blood type of each of your children?

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16. What, if any, illnesses have been in your family?

17. What, if any, illnesses have been in your children's mother's family?

18. If there were an emergency at your children's school, whom would the school contact? What is the telephone number of this person?

19. Who is the best friend of each of your children?

20. Do your children participate in any sports or after-school activities? If so, which ones?

21. When did each of your children get his or her last report card? What grades were on it?

22. If one of your children ran away from home, where would you first look for him or her?

23. How many cousins do your children have?

24. What do your children want to be when they grow up?

25. What is each child's favorite TV show?

26. What is the name of the last book each child read?

27. When did each child last go to the doctor for a checkup?

28. Do your children wear eyeglasses? If so, when were their eyes last tested?

29. Which holidays do your children celebrate?

30. What is a normal temperature for a child? What would you do if your child had a fever?

31. What would you do if your child drank something poisonous (such as bleach or drain cleaner)?

32. Whose names are listed on each child's birth certificate?

33. What size clothing does each child wear?

34. Do your children have any significant fears? If so, what do they fear?

35. Do your children have a favorite toy, hobby, or item? If so, what is it?

Child Care Checklist

Purpose: To help the fathers evaluate the range of situations and tasks involved in caring for children. To identify which situations and tasks the fathers feel comfortable handling and which they need help with.

Materials: Handouts, "Child Care Checklist" and "Child Care Questions"; pencils (for everyone).

Time: 30-35 minutes.

Planning Note: Write the discussion questions for the small groups on newsprint before the activity "Child Care Checklist." If there are fathers in your group who are not in contact with their children, ask them to respond to the checklist based on what they would feel if or when they reestablish contact. They can also answer the checklist based on children they do have contact with now, such as their partner's children, nieces, nephews, or friends' children. Remind the men to be sensitive to fathers who do not have contact with their children.

Procedure: Tell the fathers that many responsibilities and tasks go into raising children, whether their custody is full time, part time, or occasional. Say something like, "The kinds of skills needed to be an effective parent vary with the age of your children. In this activity, you should assume that you are caring for your children for a week, during which time you will encounter all the things on the 'Child Care Checklist.' To prepare for this, you first will be asked to rate how you feel about the various situations and tasks on the checklist, which match the following stages of children's development":

- Infants (newborns to age 1)
- Toddlers (ages 1 to 3)
- Preschoolers (ages 3 to 5)
- School-age children (ages 6 to 10)
- Pre-teens (ages 11 to 13)
- Adolescents (ages 13 to 18)

Instruct the group to use the following scale in rating the child care tasks:

1. Put an **E** beside any task you would **Enjoy** doing but would need help with.
2. Put an **S** beside any task that you already have the **Skills** to do.
3. Put an **H** beside any task that you would have a **Hard** time doing.

Tell each father to complete the sections of the checklist that match the ages of his children. For example, if a father has a 3-year-old and a 10-year-old, he should complete the sections for preschoolers and for school-age children. Give the men approximately 10 minutes to complete the checklists.

After each father has completed at least one section of the checklist, tell the men to form six small groups, one for each stage of child development (infant group, toddler group, preschool group, etc.) If there aren't enough men to have at least two in each group, combine the age categories — for example, pre-teens and adolescents — so that there are fewer groups. Ask each father to join the group that is closest to the age of his child; if he has more than one child, he should join the group in which his oldest child would fit.

Next, distribute the handout "Child Care Questions" to guide the small groups in talking about their responses to the "Child Care Checklist." After the small groups have discussed these questions, reconvene the entire group, and ask the following questions:

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What did you think about the activity?
2. Which of the situations on the "Child Care Checklist" have you faced?
3. Which *kinds* of situations on the checklist are hardest to deal with for most of you? (For example, are the hardest situations the ones about correcting or disciplining your children's behavior, or the ones about knowing what to do when your children are upset?)
4. Have any of you faced difficult situations with your children that are not on the checklist? If so, describe those situations, and say why they were difficult.
5. Which situations on the checklist would be better handled by someone other than you? Why? To whom would you turn for help?
6. Do you deal differently with your sons than with your daughters? If so, describe the differences.
7. Are you more comfortable spending time with a son or with a daughter? Why?
8. With which age group do you feel most comfortable? Why?
9. What have you learned from this activity about what to expect from your children at various ages?
10. Did you pick up any good advice from the other fathers as your group went through the checklist? If so, what advice did you get?
11. How do you think that most fathers learn how to be good parents? (Likely responses: by watching their mothers or the mothers of their children; by reading parenting books; by asking questions of neighbors, doctors, friends, relatives; by trial and error.) How did you learn parenting?
12. Look at your overall rating on the Child Care Checklist. How well do you think you are doing as a father?
13. What special challenge do you face when you do not have custody of your children? (For example, are children more likely to misbehave when you are not the primary caregiver? Do young children have a hard time adjusting to change when they are not with their mothers?)
14. What can you do to make the best of the time your children are with you? (Say something like, "Children respond well to consistency. Try establishing a routine around meals, bedtime, chores, etc.")

Child Care Checklist

Infants (Newborns to Age 1)

Mark the tasks that you might have to do for your newborn in the following manner:

1. Put an **E** beside any task you would **Enjoy** doing but would need help with.
2. Put an **S** beside any task that you already have the **Skills** to do.
3. Put an **H** beside any task that you would have a **Hard** time doing.

___ Helping deliver the baby

___ Changing the baby's diaper

___ Feeding the baby with a bottle

___ Getting up at night to care for the baby

___ Giving the baby a bath

___ Calming a colicky baby

___ Taking care of the baby when you are sick

___ Staying home full time to care for the baby

___ Figuring out what's wrong with a crying baby

___ Dealing with a fussy baby who is teething and crying all the time

___ Handling a baby who won't let you go because he or she is afraid of strangers

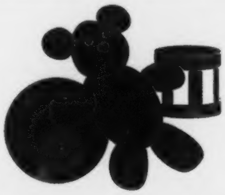
___ Dressing the baby

___ Playing with the baby

___ Taking the baby for doctor visits

___ Dealing with all the time that your partner spends with the baby (time that she used to spend with you)

Child Care Checklist



Toddlers (Ages 1 to 3)

Mark the tasks that you might have to do for your toddler in the following manner:

1. Put an **E** beside any task you would **Enjoy** doing but would need help with.

2. Put an **S** beside any task that you already have the **Skills** to do.

3. Put an **H** beside any task that you would have a **Hard** time doing.

___ Helping a toddler learn words and sentences

___ Dealing with temper tantrums

___ Toilet teaching

___ Playing with your child

___ Reading to your child

___ Handling a child who hits or bites

___ Dealing with "messes" around mealtime

___ Dealing with problem behaviors (a child who won't share, says "no" to everything, demands your attention constantly, etc.)

___ Changing the house to make it safe for a child

___ Dealing with your child's expression of emotions, including anger, rage, fear, sadness, frustration, etc.

Child Care Checklist

Preschoolers (Ages 3 to 5)

Mark the tasks that you might have to do for your preschooler in the following manner:

1. Put an **E** beside any task you would **Enjoy** doing but would need help with.
2. Put an **S** beside any task that you already have the **Skills** to do.
3. Put an **H** beside any task that you think you would have a **Hard** time doing.

___ Dealing with your child's abundant curiosity

___ Dealing with your child's jealousy about a younger brother or sister

___ Answering your child's questions about sexuality and people's bodies

___ Dealing with your child's need to test limits

___ Dealing with bed wetting or tantrums when your child is upset

___ Taking care of your child when he or she is sick

___ Dealing with your child's fears (such as nightmares about monsters)

___ Dealing with your child's aggressive behavior

___ Dealing with a child who tells lies or spits

___ Keeping your child safe from strangers

___ Teaching your child right from wrong

___ Cooking for your child

___ Getting involved with your child's daycare center or preschool

___ Teaching your child a sport or skill (to throw or catch a ball, to do a cartwheel, to play checkers, etc.)

___ Teaching your child about his or her culture and/or religion

Child Care Checklist

School-Age Children (Ages 6 to 10)

Mark the tasks that you might have to do for your school-age child in the following manner:

1. Put an **E** beside any task you would **Enjoy** doing but would need help with.
2. Put an **S** beside any task that you already have the **Skills** to do.
3. Put an **H** beside any task that you would have a **Hard** time doing.

___ Selecting a first grade for your child
___ Helping your child with homework
___ Attending meetings at school
___ Disciplining your child's behavior (for fighting with other children, stealing, refusing to go to school, etc.)
___ Teaching values to your child
___ Giving your child chores around the house
___ Playing sports with your son
___ Playing sports with your daughter
___ Encouraging your child to think and learn
___ Taking your child or school/family trips
___ Becoming a baseball coach or troop leader
___ Dealing with your child's feelings (sadness, worry, anger, etc.)
___ Teaching your child the "facts of life"
___ Helping your child understand other people and problems in the world
___ Encouraging your child to be independent
___ Teaching your child about his or her culture and/or religion

Child Care Checklist

Pre-Teens (Ages 11 to 13)

Mark the tasks that you might have to do for your pre-teen child in the following manner:

1. Put an **E** beside any task you would **Enjoy** doing but would need help with.
2. Put an **S** beside any task that you already have the **Skills** to do.
3. Put an **H** beside any task that you would have a **Hard** time doing.

___ Talking with your daughter about puberty (menstrual periods, bodily changes, etc.)

___ Talking with your son about puberty (voice changes, hair growth, wet dreams, etc.)

___ Talking with your teen about sex (responsibility, safety, etc.)

___ Dealing with your teen's mood swings

___ Making rules about dating

___ Helping your teen become responsible at home and school

___ Dealing with the way your teen dresses

___ Dealing with your teen's choice of friends

___ Talking with your teen about AIDS

___ Disciplining your teen when he or she tests your rules

___ Monitoring the music, movies, and other media influences on your teen

___ Talking with your teen about racism and discrimination

___ Teaching your teen about his or her culture and/or religion

___ Attending parent conferences, meetings at school

Child Care Checklist

Adolescents (Ages 13 to 18)

Mark the situations that you might have to handle regarding your adolescent child in the following manner:

1. Put an **E** beside any situation you would **Enjoy** handling but would need help with.
2. Put an **S** beside any situation that you already have the **Skills** to handle.
3. Put an **H** beside any situation that you would have a **Hard** time handling.

___ Your teen has a boyfriend/girlfriend.

___ Your teen is experimenting with drugs or drinking.

___ Your teen wants to get a job.

___ Your teen wants to go away to college.

___ Your teen wants to drop out of school.

___ Your daughter gets pregnant.

___ Your son gets his girlfriend pregnant.

___ Your son is dating a number of different girls.

___ Your daughter is dating a number of different guys.

___ Your son or daughter joins a religious cult.

___ Your daughter wants to move in with her boyfriend.

___ Your teen is depressed.

___ Your teen wants to move in with you.

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HANDOUT

___ Your teen criticizes your girlfriend/wife.

___ Your teen gets arrested.

___ Your daughter wants to join the Marines.

___ Your teen says, “I hate you.”

___ Your teen won’t talk to you.

___ Your teen is hanging out with a rough group of friends.

___ Your teen gets a scholarship to go away to college.

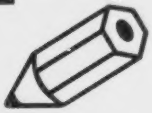
___ Your teen asks for your advice about what to do with his or her life.

___ Your son gets harassed by the police.

___ Your teen runs away from home.

___ Your teen is struggling with issues of racism and discrimination.

Child Care Questions



1. Overall, which of the six stages of child development would be easiest for you to deal with? Why? Which of the tasks for that age group would you enjoy most? Why?

2. With which age group have you had the most difficulty already? With which age groups do you expect to have the most difficulty in the future? Why? What tasks for those age groups are hard for you? Why?

3. With what specific child care situations do you need the most help? Why?

4. Which kinds of child care situations have you faced that you weren't sure how to handle?

Fathering on Weekends

Purpose: To increase participants' skills at providing part-time care for their children. To enable participants to support one another by exchanging solutions for the challenges they've faced.

Materials: Handout, "Case Studies: Paul, Andrew, Marcus, and José" (copy for each small group); Leader Resource, "Case-Study Questions"; newsprint and marker.

Time: 30-35 minutes.

Planning Note: Before the activity, post on newsprint the questions for the case studies about Paul, Andrew, Marcus, and José.

Procedure: Remind the fathers that Activity 8-3 gave them an opportunity to think about the situations and tasks that go into caring for children, and that they now have a better idea of how they would handle child care. Say something like, "The next activity explores some specific issues that come up for fathers who are trying to manage the care of children from different relationships." Emphasize that single fathers — whether living with their children or not — are responsible for taking proper care of their children. Fathers need to know how to respond to their children's physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs. Parenting skills come with experience. No one is born knowing how to be a good parent; mothers and fathers *learn* how to be effective parents.

Be sure to acknowledge any fathers in the group who do not have contact with their children. Say something like, "I hope that this activity's information will be useful to you when you *can* visit your children. I'm sure that everyone in the group is supportive of you in the circumstances you face."

Begin the activity by summarizing the four case studies for the group:

- The case study about *Paul* focuses on his daughter's daily needs (such as her likes and dislikes concerning food, clothing, bathing, etc.).
- The case study about *Andrew* focuses on balancing the emotional needs of two families and on the special issues facing kids who have to fit into "blended families."
- The case study about *Marcus* focuses on what to do with the time you have with your children to make the visit pleasant for everyone, especially when you can't afford to "entertain" your children.
- The case study about *José* focuses on the difficult emotional issues that come up for a father when dealing with his children and their relationships with family members.

Tell each father to select the case study that most closely matches his situation, explaining that he will join one of four groups, depending on which case study he wants to discuss. Then tell the men to break into the four groups, and distribute the appropriate case study to each group. Also post the newsprint listing the questions about Paul, Andrew, Marcus, and José. Finally, tell each group to select a reader, a recorder, and a spokesman and to respond to the questions.

Allow 15 minutes for the small groups to answer the case-study questions. Then ask the spokesman for each group to summarize participants' responses (allow 15 minutes).

Affirm the contributions of each group by applauding each presentation. After all four groups have presented, ask the following questions to discuss the special challenges faced by single fathers. Use newsprint to record the men's suggestions about handling these challenges. Record all suggestions on newsprint.

Concluding the Activity. Encourage the fathers to use all available resources to help meet their sons' and daughters' child care needs. Emphasize that fathers who have only part-time custody (on weekends or for short periods) need to know their children's daily routines in order to avoid disrupting them and to make the time with the children more enjoyable.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What specific steps should Paul take before next weekend to improve his care of Teesha?
2. What can Andrew do to help his children deal with the fact that he has a new family? In particular, what can he do about Steve's problems in school?
3. What are some inexpensive fun things that Marcus can do with his children on their weekend visits?
4. Have any of you experienced what Marcus is going through? If so, how do you feel when your children don't seem to want to spend time with you?
5. What do you think José should do about the situation with his daughter, Theresa? What are the main issues in this case study? How should José handle Theresa's request not to talk with Nadia about John?
6. What special challenges do you face when caring for your children part time? (Consider such things as cooking, dressing them, doing their hair, dealing with their emotions, and balancing their needs with the needs of your new family.)
7. Which child care tasks do you do well? Which tasks or situations are still hard for you? What can you do to improve your skills? Where can you get help?
8. Should fathers be expected to perform the same child care tasks as mothers? Why or why not?
9. What are some of the things that you like about spending time with your children? What are some of the things that you find hard?
10. How has your relationship with your children changed as they got older? How do you expect it to change in the future?
11. What problems, if any, have you encountered when sharing parenting responsibilities with your children's mother? How have you handled these problems?
12. What suggestions do you have to make co-parenting work for your children?

Case Study: Paul

Paul, who is 23, recently gained part-time custody of his two-year-old daughter, Teesha. He may now see her every other weekend. Although Paul had been looking forward to this opportunity for a long time, on his first weekend he was a little nervous, because he had never cared for Teesha for more than a couple hours at a time.

Paul showed up early on Friday to pick up Teesha. After a brief conversation with her mother, he took Teesha to his apartment. Paul didn't think to check the contents of Teesha's overnight bag or to ask any questions about her care. He believed that everything would go fine.

About six o'clock Friday evening, Paul took Teesha out to dinner. He ordered each of them a hamburger, fries, and a soda. But even after he broke Teesha's food into small pieces, she refused to eat. Paul then offered her something to drink, which she also refused. Teesha began to cry, "I want my Mommy!"

Feeling somewhat embarrassed and frustrated, Paul quickly bagged the remaining food, and they went home. To quiet Teesha, he gave her potato chips and candy, which she ate. He then prepared her bathwater, and he bathed her with his own bar of soap on a rope.

Saturday morning Teesha woke up with a rash all over her body. Paul immediately tried to dress her, but there was only a pair of jeans in her bag — no T-shirt or blouse. Paul threw his hands up in the air and screamed, "Why is all this happening to me?"

Case Study: **Andrew**

Andrew is a 28-year-old father who has two children from a previous relationship — a nine-year old son, Steve, and a six-year-old daughter, Kanta. Although the children have lived with their mother since the relationship ended, Andrew has always seen them at least every other weekend. His relationship with their mother was friendly, and Andrew often stopped by during the week to see his kids.

About six months ago Andrew got married, and his new wife is expecting their first child. As he tries to manage the demands of his new family, Andrew finds that he is unable to spend as much time with his kids as he used to — and less time than he would like. His new wife has complained that his child support payments are excessive and drain resources away from their family. In addition, his kids' mother has complained that his irregular visits are disrupting her household and the children's lives; if he can't visit regularly, she would prefer that he not visit at all.

Andrew's son Steve has begun to have difficulty in school. The guidance counselor reported that the boy seems depressed, and lately Steve has been in several fistfights. The counselor sent a letter home to Andrew, suggesting that Steve's problem may be the lack of contact with his father. Andrew is really upset, but he doesn't know how to get out of this mess.

Case Study: **Marcus**

Marcus is a 33-year-old father with three children: a 12-year-old daughter, Danielle; a nine-year-old son, Marcus, Jr.; and a four-year-old son, Michael. Marcus and his wife have been divorced for about two years and have shared joint custody of the children. When they first separated, Marcus was working as a foreman in a factory, where he earned a decent salary with good benefits. Heartbroken over the separation, Marcus turned all his attention and free time to his three children; in his words, "They are all I have left in this world."

At first, the children loved spending weekends with their dad. Marcus would pick them up every Friday night and head straight to a restaurant, followed by the arcade, roller skating, or wherever the children suggested. Unfortunately, all of this changed nine months ago, when the factory where Marcus worked closed down. Since then, Marcus has been unable to find another job, no matter how hard he has looked. He has begun to realize that the kids don't want to spend time with him anymore. When he goes to pick them up now, only his four-year-old son is ready to go with him. His ex-wife explained to Marcus that the older kids say things are boring at his house. They complain to her that they don't have fun at Dad's anymore because they never go anywhere or do anything. Marcus feels really angry and betrayed by the kids. He feels that they have used him as a "walking wallet"; now that he doesn't have money to spend on them, they don't have any time for him. But his ex-wife has accused him of being so bitter and disappointed about losing his job that the kids are afraid of him, saying he's always in a bad mood and that he's scary to be around. Marcus feels as though no one understands how hard things are for him, and he says that he might as well stop coming to get the kids for their weekly visits.

Case Study: José

José is a 36-year-old father with a 14-year-old son, Thomas, and a 16-year-old daughter, Theresa. Both children live with their mother, Nadia, who recently married a man named John. Although José does not have regularly scheduled visits with his children, Thomas and Theresa often stop by to see him when they are in the neighborhood. Recently, however, Theresa has been coming around a lot more often, and often she has asked José if she can spend the night. José has noticed that Theresa seems depressed and quiet lately, but when he has asked if anything is wrong, she answers no. José has always felt a little uncomfortable around Theresa; he imagined that this was because she is a girl and because girls always talk more with their mothers.

It's now Friday night, and Theresa stops by again — this time with a shopping bag filled with her clothes. She has been crying. She tells José that she had a fight with her mother, and she asks whether she can stay for the weekend. When José presses her for details about what happened with her mother, Theresa says that she doesn't want to talk about it. She blurts out: "I hate John. Mommy always believes him and never me." Then she begs José not to tell her mother that she said anything bad about John.

José is not sure what to do. He wants Theresa to know that she can depend on him, because this is the first time she has actually confided in him and asked for his help. On the other hand, he is worried that something very serious may be going on at Nadia's house, and that makes him feel concerned.

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Leader Resource

Case Study Questions

Questions about Paul

1. What are the main causes of Paul's problems?
2. What could Paul have done to prevent some of his problems?
3. Which specific child care skills does Paul need in order to take better care of Teesha?
4. What kinds of help from family and friends could Paul use in caring for Teesha?

Questions about Andrew

1. What special problem does Andrew face?
2. How might Andrew handle the complications of two families' competing needs?
3. What special skills does Andrew need in order to manage his two families?
4. Why is the new wife's opinion of Andrew's children an issue now, when it wasn't an issue before they got married?
5. To whom can Andrew and his son Steve turn for help with their problems? (Consider such sources of help as the family, marital counseling, Big Brothers, a support group for "blended families," and a therapist for Steve.)
6. What steps could Andrew have taken to avoid this problem with Steve?

Questions about Marcus

1. How do you explain what has gone wrong between Marcus and his three children?
2. How could Marcus have prevented the problems he's having with his kids?
3. What suggestions do you have to help Marcus reestablish a relationship with his two older children?
4. Where can Marcus turn for help? (For example, his ex-wife, other family members, or close friends could give him suggestions about how to deal with his kids' reluctance to spend time with him; or a counselor could help him deal with his reactions to being out of work.)
5. What kinds of support does Marcus need from his ex-wife in order to improve his children's visits?

Questions about José

1. What are the main issues that José has to deal with?
2. How do you think José should handle Theresa's request to stay at his house? How should he handle her request not to discuss her feelings about John with Nadia?
3. What suggestions do you have for José? How can he gain Theresa's trust while also ensuring her safety?
4. Which issues should José discuss with Nadia? Which should he keep to himself?

Making Visits Count

Purpose: To identify positive ways by which fathers can promote their children's growth and development. To help fathers identify ways in which they can spend "quality" time with their children.

Materials: Handout, "Fill-in-the-Blanks Story" (one for each small group); pencils (one for each small group); newsprint and marker.

Time: 20-25 minutes.

Procedure: Start by asking the fathers to tell how they usually spend time with their children. In particular, ask:

- How often and for how long do you usually visit your children?
- How do you usually spend your time with your children? (For example, do you stay home a lot? Go out a lot? Spend time in the park?)
- In what ways do the mothers of your children encourage or support your visits? In what ways do they interfere with your visits?
- When you are working, how much money do you usually spend on your children?

Comment that noncustodial fathers often feel like "walking wallets"; that is, they feel that they constantly need to be doing things, going places, and spending money on their children. Ask whether any of the fathers have felt this way and, if so, what this experience is like. Say something like, "Children who see their fathers for visitation days or weekends often come to expect that this time should always be 'fun' and 'exciting,' and so they expect their fathers to entertain them. This can be hard on any father who doesn't have much money."

Ask the fathers for suggestions about how to deal with the expectations of their children and others (such as the child's mother, grandmother, etc.). Make a list of their suggestions, and post it on newsprint where everyone can see it.

Tell the fathers that this activity focuses on things they can do to help their children feel good about themselves — things that don't cost money and that will improve their relationship. (If they used the case study about Marcus in Activity 8-4, remind them of the problems Marcus faced in satisfying his children.)

Introduce the storytelling activity by telling the fathers that they will use their creativity to identify ways by which they can promote their children's development and self-esteem. Explain that they will work in pairs to create stories about some great fathers. Divide the group into pairs, and give each pair the handout and a pencil. Or, if the group prefers, each father can create his own story. In that case, be sure that everyone can read. If not, read the story aloud, and then let the group work together to fill in the blanks *verbally*.

Tell participants to complete the story by filling the blanks with their own words. They may tell a story about themselves and their children, or they may create fictional characters. The goal is to tell a story about a father whose visit with his child helps the child to learn and develop and also to feel good about himself or herself. Before the men begin, you could give some examples or have the group brainstorm.

After approximately 10 minutes, ask each participant (or each pair) to read the story aloud. Some stories are likely to be humorous, while others may be sad. Applaud after each story, and then ask the group to identify the strategies in it that promote the child's self-esteem.

Now ask the fathers to brainstorm and share their ideas about things to do with their children — including places to go — that don't cost much money. Some ideas include visiting parks and playgrounds; going to museums and zoos on "free" days; taking walks; touring the "downtown" areas to see the architecture; going to libraries, street fairs, and outdoor concerts; and looking through the "Children's" section of the newspaper for free activities and events.

Remind the fathers that they need to talk with their children about each other's lives and everyday events. They should make their time with their children as "normal" as possible, so that the children will feel comfortable and relaxed when they are together.

Conclude the activity by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How do you think the time that you spend with your children will affect how they feel about themselves?
2. What is it like for you when you don't have much money to spend on your children's visits?
3. How do you respond to your children's requests to do things that cost money?
4. Which of the ideas about spending time with your children do you think you will try? Which ideas don't seem helpful? Why?
5. Considering what we talked about today, is there anything that you want to change about the time you spend with your children? If so, what?
6. In what ways do you show physical affection to your children? How do your children respond to this?
7. When you were a child, in what ways did your father show you affection? What was it like?
8. What are some of the things that you remember doing with adults when you were a child? Did you do anything with adults that didn't cost money? What are those memories like? What do you remember wanting from the adults in your life, if anything?
9. What new ideas did you get today about spending time with your children?

Fill-in-the-Blanks Story

When ____________________ asked father why they couldn't live in the same house together, father said, ____

____.

The last thing they did together was ____________________________________

____.

Dad wanted to show ____________________ how much their day together meant, so he ____

____.

Now they are spending the day together. It's been about ____________________ since father and ____________________ have seen each other. They spent the day ____

____.

Father knows that ____________________'s favorite thing to do is to ____________

____.

During the day, the two talk about many things, including ____________________

____

____.

They ____ as they said goodbye.

Over the next week, Dad wasn't able to visit his child, so he ____________________

____

to let ____________________ know that he cares.

Feedback/Wrap-up

Begin by asking the fathers to summarize what they got out of today's session. Ask the following questions to discuss their reactions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Can somebody please summarize what we talked about today?
2. What reactions do you have to the things we talked about today?
3. What did you learn today about how to care for your children?
4. What ideas did you get today about how to improve your visits with your children? Which of these ideas do you plan to try?
5. What ideas did you get today about how to help your children feel good about themselves? Which of these ideas do you plan to try?
6. For those of you who do not see your children regularly, was today's session helpful? If so, which ideas were helpful? Why?

Session 9

Dealing with Children's Behaviors

Activity **9-1**	**What's New?**	☞ 10-15 minutes
Activity **9-2**	**Looking Back, Looking Ahead**	☞ 25-30 minutes
Activity **9-3**	**Punishment or Discipline?**	☞ 15-20 minutes
Activity **9-4**	**What Do You Do?**	☞ 30-40 minutes
Activity **9-5**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ 10-15 minutes

Key Concepts

- The participants' own childhood experiences with discipline, punishment, and abuse will influence how they deal with their children.
- Both punishment and abuse are negative ways of managing children's behavior. Parents need to find effective alternatives to hitting.
- Abuse is totally inappropriate and unacceptable. It is also illegal.
- Parents need to understand what their children are trying to accomplish through their behavior, and they need to respond in ways that are appropriate to the child's specific age.
- Discipline is effective in teaching children themselves to control their behavior.

Materials Checklist

Activity 9-2 Looking Back, Looking Ahead

☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Activity 9-3 Punishment or Discipline?

☐ Leader Resource, "Discipline, Punishment, and Abuse"
☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Activity 9-4 What Do You Do?

☐ Leader Resources, "Game Situations" and "Role-Play Situations"
☐ Handout, "Age Makes a Difference"
☐ Newsprint
☐ Markers
☐ Index cards (optional)

What's New?

Begin by asking the fathers how they are doing today. Then ask the following questions to discuss their reactions to the last session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Have any of you taken care of your children since the last session? If so, how did it go?
2. Did any of you try the group's suggestions about how to improve visits with your children? If so, which suggestions did you try? What happened?
3. Did anybody try the inexpensive or free things that the group came up with last week? If so, what things did you do? What happened?
4. Do you have any questions or concerns about your children that you'd like to share?

Tell the fathers that today's session will focus on managing children's behavior in ways that help them do what's right. Say something like, "Today, we'll identify ways to correct or manage your children's behavior without yelling, hitting, or responding in other forceful or abusive ways. All children have trouble behaving at times; and all parents get frustrated in their efforts to raise them. Once again, remember to be supportive of each other as we share ideas about dealing with children's behavior."

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Purpose: To have participants identify how they were disciplined when they were children. To examine how their childhood experiences with discipline affect their parenting style today. To help the fathers learn effective alternatives to hitting as they attempt to change or correct their children's behavior.

Materials: Newsprint and marker.

Time: 30 minutes.

Planning Note: This activity may stir up participants' feelings. Be prepared for this, and be sensitive to both individual and group dynamics. People who were abused as children often have difficulty disciplining their own children as parents. If a participant needs help in learning how to be an effective parent, consider referring him to counseling or parenting classes. Agencies such as the YMCA, the Urban League, and other United Way organizations may provide parenting classes. Also check whether your community has Parents Anonymous, a self-help group for parents who are concerned about the way they respond to their children's behavior or who are abusive and need to learn alternative ways to discipline their children.

Procedure: Tell the group that today's session will focus on ways to deal with children's misbehavior. Ask the fathers to identify some of their children's behaviors that cause problems, and post their list on newsprint. (If you have already talked about this, post the list to remind them of the kinds of behaviors that cause them concern. Just take a few minutes for this.)

Next, ask the fathers to get into a comfortable position and to think about some time in their childhood when a parent or a relative corrected their behavior. Help the fathers to recall the details of their experiences by asking the following questions.

- How old were you?
- Where were you?
- What were you doing?
- How did the adult respond? (Did he or she respond physically, with words, or with silence?)
- How did you feel about this experience?
- What did you learn from this experience?

Tell the fathers that in a couple of minutes they will be asked to share their experiences with the group. Then allow a few minutes of quiet time, and ask the men to tell their stories. First, model the process by sharing an experience from your own childhood: describe the incident and your feelings about it at the time. When everyone has talked about a similar experience, ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. In general, how did your parents or caregiver try to manage your behavior? (Comment about the differences in family styles of discipline.)
2. Did your parent or caregiver say anything to you about the way he or she was managing your behavior? (For example, did the adult say things like, "I'm going to make sure you never forget what I said"; "This hurts me more than it hurts you"; or "I'm disappointed in you.")
3. What feelings does this activity raise in you? Do you feel like an adult or like a child?
4. Do you think that your parents' or caregiver's style of discipline has influenced how you deal with your own children when they misbehave? (For example, do you tend to respond to your children's misbehavior in the same way that you were treated? Or do you respond differently, because you didn't like the way you were treated?)
5. What specific problems have you had in managing your children's behavior?
6. How do you feel when your children don't listen to you?
7. Does being a noncustodial parent affect how you deal with your children? If so, how? (For example, are you more lenient with your children because you don't see them everyday? Do your children react differently to your demands and expectations than they do to their mother's?)
8. If your children did this activity 15 years from now, what do you think they would say about how you corrected their behavior?

Punishment or Discipline?

Purpose: To clarify, define, and understand the terms discipline and punishment. To help fathers understand the meaning of abuse.

Materials: Leader Resource, "Discipline, Punishment, and Abuse"; newsprint and marker.

Time: 20 minutes.

Planning Note: Draw a line to divide a sheet of newsprint into two columns, and label them "Punishment" and "Discipline." Post the newsprint, and prepare a list of two or three situations that the fathers have shared in which they had to manage their children's behavior (or use the examples given below).

Procedure: Explain to the participants that this activity will examine two different philosophies of managing children's behavior: *punishment* and *discipline*. Ask the men to explain how punishment and discipline are different. Say something like, "When you think of the word *punishment,* what words or actions come to mind?" (Responses are likely to include hitting, yelling, taking away privileges, grounding the child, etc.) Now ask them to think of the word *discipline* and again ask what words or actions come to mind. (Examples may include teaching, praising, correcting negative or wrong behavior, reinforcing good behavior, etc.) Now tell the fathers to recall the incidents they described in Activity 9.2 (if possible, post the newsprint from that activity). Finally, ask them to think about whether their examples consist of discipline or punishment, or whether they are something else (such as *abuse:* inflicting pain or injury on a child, putting a child down, making a child feel bad about himself or herself, etc.).

In your own words, explain that *discipline* teaches children how to act; discipline should make sense to children, and should have something to do with what they have done wrong. Discipline helps children to feel good about themselves. It gives them a chance to correct their mistakes, and it puts them in control of their actions.

(The word *discipline* and the word *disciple* both come from the same Latin word meaning "pupil"; in this context, then, *discipline* means following the guidance of someone who "teaches.")

In contrast, *punishment* tells children only that they have been bad; it does not tell them what to do instead. Punishment often doesn't make sense to children, because it usually doesn't have anything to do with what the children have done wrong.

Abuse hurts a child physically and emotionally; it encourages children to grow up feeling bad about themselves and others.

Based on this discussion and the Leader Resource "Discipline, Punishment, and Abuse," add to the newsprint list of characteristics of discipline and punishment. Explain that you are going to give the group two or three examples of situations that parents face with their children. Then present situation 1 (below), and ask, "How might a father punish Michelle in this situation? How might he discipline or teach her?" Record the fathers' ideas about punishment and discipline in this case, and add ideas from the suggested responses below.

SITUATION 1. Your three-year-old-daughter, Michelle, wants to be with you while you are cooking dinner, but she keeps running toward the stove. How do you handle the situation?

Punishment: Yell at Michelle, and drag her out of the kitchen.

Discipline: Tell Michelle *firmly* that, if she wants to stay with you in the kitchen, she must not go near the stove, because it is hot and she could hurt herself. If she continues to play near the stove, lead her by the hand to another room. Tell her she can come back to the kitchen and try again in five minutes.

Continue the discussion by asking the following questions:

- What results would the punishment response have? (Michelle may stay out of the kitchen out of *fear*, but she will not understand why it is dangerous to go near the stove.)
- What results would the discipline response have? (Michelle would learn that the stove is hot and can hurt her.)
- How much control should parents expect a three-year-old to have? (For example, can a three-year-old remember *every time* to stay away from the stove?)

Make the point that three-year-olds are little children who are just learning the rules and the way that the world works. They cannot be trusted to keep themselves safe, because they are still "me-focused" (that is, they think that the world revolves around them and that they can have or do whatever they want). They need constant supervision. This is normal for this stage of development, which should be kept in mind when a parent disciplines a three-year-old. Remind the fathers to think about the age of the child when they consider the other examples you will discuss.

Then present the other examples (either from the fathers' list or from below). Use the same discussion format, and record any relevant points on the newsprint list of punishment and discipline.

SITUATION 2. Your two-year-old son, Sam, writes on the wall with a crayon.

Punishment: Tell Sam that he is a bad boy, and slap his hands.

Discipline: Take the crayons away (until the next day), and tell Sam that crayons are used in coloring books or on paper, not on walls. Explain that crayon marks make the walls dirty.

SITUATION 3. Your six-year-old daughter Maria hits her four-year-old sister with a bat.

Punishment: Yank the bat away from Maria, and send her to her room.

Discipline: Take the bat away, and tell Maria that hitting is not OK and that she has to use words to tell her sister why she is angry. Ask Maria to apologize, and tell her that she will have to go to her room if she hits her sister again.

End the activity by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of punishment? (*Advantages:* Punishment is easy and fast; it keeps the adult in control; and it usually produces quick results. *Disadvantages:* Punishment teaches children the importance of power, and it shows that violence is a good way to resolve conflict; it has the potential to turn into abuse; and it does not teach children why their behavior is wrong or how to correct it.)
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of discipline? (*Advantages:* Discipline teaches and gives responsibility to the children; it is more humane than punishment; it teaches lessons about the consequences of actions, by saying, "When you do this . . . such and such will happen"; it helps children to feel good about themselves when they please others as well as themselves; and it helps children know what is expected of them so that they can feel safe. *Disadvantages:* Discipline takes more initial effort, time, patience, and creativity.)
3. When does punishment become abuse? (*Examples:* When children are pushed, kicked, choked, hit, punched, locked out of the house, abandoned in dangerous places, left home alone at young ages, or threatened or hurt with a weapon. Also talk about emotional abuse, as when parents or caregivers refuse or neglect to give children consistent love, attention, and protection; or when parents ignore, belittle, or insult children. Emphasize that abuse is unacceptable behavior for parents.)
4. Based on the way you were raised, do you think that your parents responded to your behavior in ways that helped you learn right from wrong? Why or why not? What kinds of messages did you get about yourself from the way your parents responded to your behavior? (Did you feel good or bad about yourself? Did you believe that your parents loved you? Did you fear or respect them?)
5. Now that you have considered the differences among discipline, punishment, and abuse, which method do you think is most effective in getting children to be well behaved? Why?
6. If you were to use discipline instead of hitting to handle your children's behavior, what reactions would you expect from them? What reactions would you expect from their mothers or grandparents?

Leader Resource

Discipline, Punishment, and Abuse

Discipline

- Expresses concern in a firm but warm manner: "You *must not* touch that, because you could get hurt."
- Focuses on the behavior that needs to change, not on the child's personality: "I will listen to you when you stop whining and tell me what you want" instead of "You are such a whiner. Be quiet!"
- Teaches successful behavior through close, warm interactions: "I will help you pick up your toys this time, so that next time you will be able to do it yourself."
- Gives a child a second chance to try behaving correctly: "You need to go to your room now, but you can come back and try again when you are able to calm down."
- Is difficult in the short run but easier in the long run, as the child learns appropriate behavior and self-discipline.

Children learn ways to control their own behavior and to manage conflicts with others. (Children under the age of three or four are usually not capable of controlling their own behavior. They still need their parents to guide and protect their actions.)

Some good ways to discipline children include: making your rules and expectations clear in advance; ignoring negative behavior; setting clear limits; talking and explaining; letting the child experience natural consequences; distracting the child; holding the child; helping the child master a task; using rewards (positive consequences for doing the right thing).

Punishment (A negative consequence for doing or not doing something)

- Expresses anger and power. (The parent uses force to make the child behave, which can lead the child to fear the parent.)
- Is usually inconsistent, because it depends on the parent's mood. (This confuses children. They learn that they have to be concerned about what parents will do, instead of learning how to control their own behavior.)
- Can easily lead to physical and emotional abuse of the child. (The more the child is punished, the more he or she begins to "tune out" the parent. This often leads the parent to make an even more forceful response.)
- Is negative and focuses on failure. (The parent attempts to stop the child's behavior but doesn't provide opportunities for the child to try again.)
- Is easy or convenient in the short run but has short-lasting effects. (The child often learns how "not to get caught"; thus, behavior is often repeated when the parent is not present.)

Punishment should never be violent and should be used only as a last resort, when children do not respond to guidance. Other techniques such as time out, loss of privileges, and being grounded are far more effective in changing children's behavior.

Abuse

Abuse or neglect of children can be physical or emotional. Physical abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver inflicts pain or injury on a child. Emotional abuse occurs when parents or caregivers refuse to give children love, attention, protection, and encouragement; or when parents degrade, insult, or ignore their children. Abuse is *never* OK. Children who are abused learn that the people who love you hurt you, and that the world is a dangerous place. When people who were abused as children become parents, they tend to abuse their own children.

What Do You Do?

Purpose: To give the fathers the opportunity to identify constructive and age-appropriate ways to deal with their children's behavior.

Materials: Leader Resources, "Game Situations" and "Role-Play Situations"; handout, "Age Makes a Difference"; newsprint and markers; index cards (optional).

Time: 40 minutes.

Planning Note: Depending on the size and character of your group, choose either the game version or the role-playing version of "What Do You Do?" (both procedures are described below). Write on newsprint and post later the major points about discipline during the five stages of development, using the handout "Age Makes a Difference." If the group will do role plays, copy the Leader Resource "Role-Play Situations," putting each situation either on a separate sheet of newsprint or an index card for use with each small group.

Procedure: Whether you choose procedure 1 or procedure 2 below, begin this activity by asking the fathers, "Why do you think children misbehave?" (Likely answers include: because they want attention; because they are angry and want revenge; because they're bored; because they want power and control over the situation; because they don't know or don't accept the rules; because parents are inconsistent, so children test the limits; because children are feeling inadequate and want to express their frustration.)

Explain to the group that children's misbehavior is usually an effort to communicate something, and so it is helpful to try to figure out what lies behind the behavior. Give the example of a father whose four-year-old daughter is visiting for the weekend: On Saturday afternoon, Dad's girlfriend comes to visit; the little girl becomes cranky, pulling on Dad and causing problems. Ask the group, "What might lie behind the child's behavior?" (She's jealous and wants Dad's attention.) Ask them to suggest ways that this father can satisfy his daughter's need for attention without allowing her to control his every move.

Review the four basic guidelines about discipline from the handout "Age Makes a Difference":

- **Age matters.** It's important to know what children can and cannot learn during each stage of their growth and development. Parents need to make sure that the discipline they use fits their child's age and development.
- **The power of love.** To do a good job of teaching your children desirable behavior, you need to develop a positive emotional relationship with them. Parents need to demonstrate their love for their children through kind words and physical affection. Children can be taught that you love *them*, even if you don't always love their *behavior*.
- **Mean it.** Parents need to be firm with their discipline so that their children know they mean what they say and will back it up.
- **Praise, praise, praise.** Recognize and make positive comments whenever your children behave well (even if it is something small). Parents often fall into the trap of commenting on their children's behavior only when it is unacceptable.

Continue by using your newsprint chart to review the discipline hints during the six stages of development (from the handout "Age Makes a Difference"). Then tell the men that they are going to have fun as they examine some day-to-day experiences and situations with children. Explain the procedure for the activity, depending on whether the group will play a game or do role plays (see below).

Procedure 1: Game Version of "Alternatives to Hitting." Divide the fathers into three groups: two groups of equal size (Teams A and B) and one smaller group (the judges). Give Teams A and B newsprint and markers. Explain that you will read a situation (from the Leader Resource "Game Situations") and that the teams will have two minutes to write down as many responses as they can think of.

Explain to the judges that they will listen to each team's responses to the situation and will decide which responses are more appropriate; judges should be prepared to defend their decisions. (The judges can be changed periodically, and you may need to assist them in making their decisions.)

State the rules of the game:

- Hitting cannot be a response to the situation; the teams must find *alternatives* to violence.
- When the time is up, participants can finish their thoughts, but cannot add any responses.
- Judges will give five points to the team whose responses are more likely to handle the discipline problem effectively while also teaching the child self-control. Remind the teams that their responses should be appropriate for the child's age level.

Play the game for about 20 minutes, leaving time to ask the Discussion Questions.

Procedure 2: Role-Play Version of "Alternatives to Hitting." Have the fathers count off into groups of three. Explain that each group will be given a written situation (from the Leader Resource "Role-Play Situations") in which a father has to correct his child's behavior. Then each group will act out the situation for a few minutes. Remind the fathers that they cannot use hitting as a means of correcting behavior; they must find alternatives to violence.

Distribute the role-play situations (or, if the groups prefer, they can use real situations from their own lives). Allow the groups approximately five minutes to prepare and rehearse, and then start the first role play. After each role play, ask the players what it was like to act out that situation, and then get feedback from the whole group.

After all groups have acted out their situations, move on to the Discussion Questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What are the main differences between how you discipline a child who is two or three years old and one who is four or older?
2. What new ideas did you get today about how to handle your children's behavior?
3. Have any situations come up with your own children in which you expected too much, given the child's age? What happened? In what way did you expect too much?
4. What are your opinions about spanking as a form of discipline? (Some parents believe that in some situations spanking is acceptable or necessary; others do not believe that spanking is effective or good, but they sometimes do it when they are frustrated. It is important that you be nonjudgmental about the men's opinions. Emphasize the ideas about spanking that are in the handout "Age Makes a Difference.")
5. How do other people (such as your parents, your children's mother, your children's grandmother, or your girlfriend) influence your ability to manage your children's behavior?
6. How important is it for children that both their parents respond to their behavior in the same ways? What can you do to get your children's mother to cooperate with you in your efforts to discipline your children effectively?
7. How do you think that the ways you respond to your children's behavior will affect their feelings about themselves? How do your methods of disciplining them affect how they feel about you?
8. How will your methods of discipline affect your children as they get older?
9. Do fathers respond differently to their children's behavior than mothers do? If so, what is different?
10. For those of you who have part-time custody of your children, what parts of disciplining your children are easy for you? What's hard?

Questions About Game Version of "Alternatives to Hitting"

11. In which of the situations described was the behavior of the child normal for that age? (Situations 1, 4, 6, 7, 8)

12. Were the group's responses for the infants and toddlers in situations 1 through 8 consistent with what children of these ages can handle? Why or why not?

Age Makes a Difference

There are four basic guidelines for fathers to keep in mind as they discipline their children:

- **Age matters.** It's important to know what children can and cannot learn during each stage of their growth and development. Parents need to make sure that the discipline they use fits their child's age and development.
- **The power of love.** To do a good job of teaching your children desirable behavior, you need to develop a positive emotional relationship with them. Parents need to demonstrate their love for their children through kind words and physical affection. Children can be taught that you love *them*, even if you don't always love their *behavior.*
- **Mean it.** Parents need to be firm with their discipline so that their children know that they mean what they say and will back it up.
- **Praise, praise, praise.** Recognize and make positive comments whenever your children behave well (even if it is something small). Parents often fall into the trap of commenting on their children's behavior only when it is unacceptable.

The following are some age-specific hints that can help parents deal with their children's behavior.

Birth to 7 Months

- Babies cannot help being babies. They do not understand what they have done wrong, and so they cannot be disciplined effectively. Don't try.

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8 to 14 Months

- Your baby will start to explore the rules but cannot really understand or stick to them.
- Firmly say — and if necessary repeat — "No."
- Remove the baby from the situation, or distract the baby with a toy.
- Never leave the baby alone except in a safe place, such as a crib or playpen.

15 Months to 2 Years

- Your baby will begin to test the rules but still cannot stick to them. Most of what the child does at this age is still a *reflex*. The child cannot yet think about what will happen as a result of his or her actions.
- The best way to manage behavior problems is to remove the child from the situation or to distract the child with another activity.

2 to 3 Years

- These are the "terrible twos." Your child will actively challenge the rules to test limits and to get attention.
- At this age, children begin to imitate; so watch your own behavior, and model the behavior that you want from the child.
- Set firm limits, and watch your child closely. Children at this age cannot yet control themselves, so you must be in charge.
- Use redirection (get the child to focus on something else) to manage your child's behavior. When this doesn't work, establish a "time-out" chair where your child has to sit quietly for a short period after misbehaving to help him or her get back in control. Redirection and time-outs are good responses because they do not reward the child's behavior with attention from you. (The length of the time-out should match the child's age. For example, a two-year-old's time-out should be two minutes; a three-year-old's time-out should be three minutes, etc.)
- Find ways to show your child that she or he does not have to misbehave to get your attention.

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HANDOUT

4 to 8 Years

- Most children during these years come to understand when they have misbehaved. Although they usually are able to control their own behavior, they still need your direction and guidance.
- Explain to your child what is wrong about the behavior, say how it made you feel, and spell out what you expect in the future.
- Let your child learn from natural and logical consequences as much as possible. (An example of a *natural consequence* is when a child gets cold as a result of playing outside without a coat; an example of a *logical consequence* is when a parent takes the child's toy away for a day because the child left it in the middle of the living-room floor.)

9 to 11 Years

- During these years, children should be getting better at managing their own behavior. They know the difference between right and wrong, and they can understand that their behavior has consequences.
- Be clear about expectations, and decide on consequences in advance. (For example, if your child's bedtime on Friday night is nine o'clock and the child refuses to go to bed on time, he or she will lose the privilege of staying up late next Friday.)
- The most effective way to handle misbehavior at these ages is to talk about what the child did wrong and why it was wrong.
- Growing children continue to need praise and positive reinforcement so that they can feel good about themselves. Being there for your children when they need someone to talk with will prevent many situations from becoming problems.

12 to 18 years

- By the time your children are teenagers, they know the difference between right and wrong. They are also at an age where they will be spending more time away from your protection and guidance.
- Good communication is essential to your relationship with your teen. Establish a particular time every day when the two of you will talk about how things are going.

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- Try not to preach to your children. They are now likely to turn to their peers and other adults for advice, so get to know the people who are important to them.
- Limit rules to those that are necessary for your child's safety.
- Be clear about your expectations for behavior, and follow through with logical consequences for misbehavior. (For example, tell your 17-year-old daughter that if she misses her curfew, she will not be allowed to go out the next night.)

A Word About Spanking

Experts disagree about the issue of spanking children; some say that spanking is necessary, while others say that it is abusive. Parents have to make their own decision. Before spanking a child to control behavior, first think about the following:

- Do not spank children who are less than two years old.
- Be aware of your own adult strength and the fact that physical punishment can become abuse.
- Spanking does not teach children what they *should* do; it may teach them only what *not* to do.
- Before you resort to spanking a child, try to figure out alternative ways to teach appropriate behavior.
- Spanking children for behavior that is natural and normal for their age may make them afraid to try things.
- Children who are spanked learn that it is acceptable to hit people.
- Spanking can make a child feel as though he or she is a bad person.

Leader Resource

Game Situations

1. Your three-month-old son cries a lot. The baby's mother tells you not to pick him up so much because you'll spoil him.

2. Your 18-month-old daughter can get stubborn at times. In the morning when you need to get to work or school, she often refuses to leave the house to go to the babysitter's.

3. Whenever you take your two-year-old daughter to the grocery store, she has a tantrum when you go past the candy aisle.

4. Your son is about to turn two. Whenever you have company, he refuses to share anything with other children. This embarrasses you.

5. You are visiting your girlfriend's house with your two-and-a-half-year-old son. Your girlfriend has a four-year-old daughter. While playing, your son takes away the girl's favorite toy, and she starts to cry.

6. When you take your three-year-old son to the basketball court with you, he often gets tired and begins to whine.

7. Your nine-month-old daughter puts anything and everything into her mouth.

8. Your two-year-old daughter wants to play with her younger brother, who is six months old. She likes to touch the baby's face, and to kiss and hug him. Some times she hugs him roughly and sticks her fingers in his eyes as she names the parts of his face.

9. You, your grandmother, and your four-year-old daughter are walking down the street. An elderly woman walks by and bumps into your daughter without saying "excuse me." Before you know it, your daughter calls the woman an "asshole."

10. Every day for a week, your six-year-old daughter comes home from school and tells you that she forgot her books to do her homework.

11. Your ten-year-old son comes home from school without the new jacket you recently bought him. He says that he took it off while he was playing basketball and that somebody stole it. You've told him a hundred times not to wear the jacket to school.

12. Your 12-year-old son has been suspended from school for the third time because he disrupted the classroom.

13. Your 17-year-old daughter has been fired from her job because she had been late every day for a week. You are counting on her to help pay for her college tuition, because you've been out of work for two months.

14. Your seven-year-old son gets furious at his five-year-old-brother for messing with his things, and so he breaks his brother's bike.

15. Your 14-year-old daughter has come home late every Saturday night for the last month. It's now Saturday again, and she asks you whether she can go to a party.

16. Your 15-year-old son was arrested for shoplifting with a group of his friends. He did not have any store merchandise in his possession, but his friends did. You have already talked with him about his friends' negative influences on him.

Leader Resource

Role-Play Situations

The underlined names are the characters to be role-played in each situation.

1. Jarrod goes to pick up his three-year-old son, Jay, who is visiting his grandmother. Jay is happy to see his dad, but he doesn't want to leave with him. When Jarrod tries to take Jay firmly by the hand and lead him out of the house, Jay holds onto his grandmother and screams, "No, I don't want to go with you!"
2. This is the first time that Mike has brought his two-year-old daughter, Sia, to the babysitter's house. When Mike arrives, Mrs. Jackson is busy, so he begins a conversation with Mr. Jackson. While Mike is talking, Sia clings to his legs. Mike tries to ignore her, but she climbs into his lap, puts her hands over his eyes, and puts her face in front of his, trying to get his attention. Embarrassed by Sia's behavior in front of Mr. Jackson, Mike tries to push her away. Sia begins to hit Mike's legs and to scream and cry in a full-blown tantrum.
3. Keith has taken his five-year-old daughter, Claudette, out for the day. Keith's new girlfriend, Sherise, is also with them. Claudette has been rude to Sherise off and on, ignoring her and demanding her father's attention. Finally Sherise says to Claudette, "I don't think you like me very much." Claudette gets right in Sherise's face and says, "You're right. Why should I like you? My momma says you're not nice, and I think so, too."
4. Donnell lives with his mother and his three-year-old son, Chris. Chris calls his grandmother "Mom." Today, Chris is riding his tricycle in the living room, and Donnell screams at him to stop. Chris sasses back, "Don't you yell at me. I'm telling Mom."
5. Stewart receives a call from his 11-year-old son's teacher, saying that Tony has not done his homework assignments for the past three days. When Tony comes home from school, Stewart asks him whether he has any homework. Tony lies and says that he doesn't have any.

6. Adrian's seven-year-old-daughter, Sasha, is staying with him for the weekend. On Saturday, Adrian's girlfriend, Nancy, shows up at his apartment with her six-year-old daughter, Tiffany. Sasha takes one look at Tiffany and says, "I'm not playing with *her. She's* retarded."

7. Joseph's 16-year-old daughter, Melissa, asks her father whether she can go to a party at her friend Maria's house. When she assures him that Maria's mother will be there to keep an eye on things, Joseph agrees to let her go. At two o'clock in the morning, Joseph gets a call from a police officer. Melissa and six of her friends have been arrested for drinking and for trashing Maria's house.

Feedback/Wrap-up

Begin by reviewing these important points from today's session:

- Children's ability to control their behavior improves as they get older, but most children cannot be expected to have self-control until they are at least four or five years old.
- Parents' efforts to correct their child's behavior should take into account the age and abilities of the child.
- Efforts to control behavior by hitting, intimidation, and yelling make children feel bad about themselves and often reinforce negative behavior. Children who are physically or emotionally hurt by their parents usually end up being aggressive, passive, or withdrawn.
- To help their children behave in desirable ways, parents need to develop a positive emotional relationship with them.

Ask the following questions to help the participants express what they got out of today's session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would anybody like to share his reactions to today's session?
2. Did you learn any new ways to manage your children's behavior today? If so, what did you learn?
3. For those of you who have custody of your children, do you plan to try any of the alternatives to hitting that were suggested today? If so, which ideas about discipline will you try?
4. For those of you who share the responsibility of raising your children with others (such as their mother), do you anticipate any problems in using these new methods of correcting behavior? If so, what problems do you expect? What steps can you take to involve other people in your efforts to manage your children's behavior?
5. For those of you who do not visit your children regularly, was today's session helpful? What did you learn today that you can use when you do visit your children?

Concluding the Session. Remind the fathers that changing children's behavior takes time. Children who are used to being treated in a certain way may have trouble adjusting to their parents' new approaches. Parents need to be consistent and honest with their children. In the long run, children will welcome a relationship with parents who make them feel good about themselves and who allow them to control their own behavior.

Summarize the three sessions (7, 8, and 9) that deal with their children's needs by reminding the men of what they've discussed. Say something like, "You've spent quite a bit of time talking and learning about your role and responsibility as fathers and about what your children need from you. In Session 7, you thought about what you *value* in your children and about how to respond to them in ways that encourage them to develop the characteristics and traits that you think are important in life. In Session 8, you talked about how to deal with the day-to-day situations that come up when taking care of your kids, and you exchanged ideas about how to improve the time you spend with them. Finally, today you explored ways to respond to your children's behavior without yelling, hitting, or otherwise harming them."

To get the fathers' reactions to the work they have done, ask, "Did the three sessions help you to understand your children better? If so, how? Do you think that your relationship with your children will improve, given what you have learned? If so, how? What are the most important things you have learned in Sessions 7, 8, and 9?"

Tell the men that learning how to be a good father is a lifelong process. Each day will bring new challenges and, it is hoped, new rewards. Inform them about local parenting groups and classes, and encourage them to attend. Finally, thank the men for their participation, and tell them that the next two sessions will focus on their other relationships — with adults. Ask them to prepare for Session 10 by thinking about their relationships with people who are important to them, including their partners, their parents, their friends, and their coworkers. What's good about these relationships? What would they like to change in these relationships?

Session 10

Relationships:
Being a Friend, Partner, Parent, and Employee

Activity **10-1**	**What's New?**	☞ 10-15 minutes
Activity **10-2**	**What's Important in a Relationship?**	☞ 30-40 minutes
Activity **10-3**	**The Relationship Scale**	☞ 40-50 minutes
Activity **10-4**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ 10-15 minutes

Key Concepts

- Throughout life, a person develops various types of relationships with many people, but all successful relationships have certain basic qualities.
- Most people have some relationships that are going well and others that need improvement.
- When people identify relationships that need improvement and establish goals for enhancing those relationships, they are more likely to feel good about themselves.

Materials Checklist

Activity **10-2** What's Important in a Relationship?

☐ Paper and pencils (for everyone)
☐ Newsprint
☐ Marker

Activity **10-3** The Relationship Scale

☐ Handout, "Setting Goals to Improve Relationships"
☐ Paper and pencils (for everyone)

What's New?

Planning Note: Remind the group of what took place at the last session. Say something like, "Last time we talked about how to be effective in managing or correcting your children's difficult behavior, and we emphasized the importance of developing alternatives to hitting." Ask the following questions to discuss the men's reactions to the last session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Does anybody have any reactions to the last session?
2. Did any of you take care of your children since the last session? If so, how did things go? Were you able to use any of the suggestions or solutions we discussed for managing your children's behavior? If so, which suggestions did you use, and how did they work?
3. Did you talk with anybody (such as your child's mother or grandparents) about the new approaches to discipline that you learned? If so, what reactions did they have?
4. What do you think you can do to get your child's mother and other caregivers to try some of the approaches you learned for disciplining your children? Are their approaches to discipline consistent with yours?
5. Do you have any additional questions or concerns about your children that you would like to bring up today?

Tell the men that today they will talk more about relationships. Ask, "Did anybody think about relationships since the last time we met? Would someone like to talk about a relationship that he has (such as with his child, child's mother, partner, etc.) that is going well? What about a relationship that is not going as well as you would like?"

Explain that today's activities will focus on the different kinds of relationships that the men have, in order to identify what is desirable about those relationships and what needs to be changed.

What's Important in a Relationship?

Purpose: To help the men identify important qualities in their various relationships (including with friends, children and family, romantic partners, and coworkers). To reinforce the idea that "people need people" to survive in this world.

Materials: Paper and pencils (for everyone); newsprint and marker.

Time: 30-40 minutes.

Planning Note: Because talking about relationships produces intense feelings in people, it is important that group members trust each other *before* doing this activity. If the men are reluctant to discuss their personal experiences, or if they have not yet bonded as a group, skip the activity for now.

Fathers who are having difficulty managing their relationships may need to be referred to outside help, especially if the relationships are volatile or dangerous. Plan for such referrals in advance by making sure that the case manager (or whoever is responsible for counseling services) is available to consult with individuals after the session.

As you facilitate the group, raise questions about both the positive *and* the negative aspects of how the fathers are relating to important people in their lives — especially custodial parents, grandparents, and others who are involved with their children. The goals of this activity are to reinforce the men's ability to support their children and to increase their effectiveness as fathers, while also improving their relationships with their children, children's mother, employer, etc. This involves helping the men to confront aspects of their relationships that need to change or improve in order for them to be successful men, fathers, and providers; it also involves helping them to identify the steps they can take to change or improve these relationships.

Session 11, "Understanding Male-Female Relationships," focuses on romantic relationships. Activities 11-5 and 11-6 require advanced planning so that you can invite guests to speak to the group. To prepare the men for this, it is necessary for you to read through Session 11 before conducting Session 10.

Procedure: Introduce Activity 10-2 by saying something like, "Human beings need to feel connected to others. We all experience different kinds of relationships in our lives — for example, with our friends and family, romantic partners, and coworkers. Today we will talk about the qualities that make relationships good. We will begin with friendships."

Ask for a volunteer to describe who is a good friend. Then ask, "What qualities make this person a good friend?" After the volunteer has responded, have the men brainstorm a list of qualities that they think are important in a friendship. Pose the question, "If you were going to make friends with someone, what would you want that relationship to include?" (That is, "What makes a friendship?") Record the group's responses on newsprint, and post it in the room. Likely responses will include:

- Trust
- Good communication
- Shared interest
- Respect
- Responsibility (following through on commitments)
- Sense of humor
- Understanding
- Support during both good and bad times

Then ask, "How do you usually choose friends? What factors do you consider about a person when you are deciding whether you will become friends? How important is it that your friends have a good influence on you? How important is it that you and your friends have the same views or lifestyles?"

Now ask, "What are some of the things that might destroy a friendship for you?" (That is, "What breaks up a friendship?") Likely responses will include:

- Violence or fighting
- Misunderstanding
- Breaking of trust
- Lack of time
- Disrespect
- Not being responsible (not following through on commitments)
- Being a bad or negative influence

Now ask for a volunteer to tell the group about an experience where a friendship was destroyed. How did the friendship end? What was the experience like? How did you feel about losing this friend?

Next, tell the men that they will use the same process to identify what they think is important in four other types of relationships:

1. With their children
2. With their family members
3. With their romantic partners
4. With their employers

Explain that the men will divide into four small groups, each of which will consider one of these types of relationships. The small groups should:

- Review the list of important qualities for friendships (posted on newsprint).
- Delete any qualities that are not important for the type of relationship their group is discussing.
- Add any qualities that they consider important for the type of relationship their group is discussing.

In addition, have each small group describe the qualities of someone with whom they could have good relationship of the type under discussion. (For example, if the group is focusing on coworkers, describe a good relationship with an employer.)

Each small group should appoint a *leader* (to keep participants focused on their task) and a *reporter* (to share their responses with the larger group).

Allow 10 minutes for small-group work, then ask for each group's report. After each report, ask the other small groups whether they have any comments to add.

End the activity by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Which relationship qualities were mentioned by every small group?
2. What differences are there in the qualities listed for a romantic relationship and the qualities listed for a friendship?
3. How are employer-employee relationships different from friendships? What are some of the things that destroy this type of relationship? (In this relationship,

the employer has some authority over the employee. Although their respect can be mutual, their sharing of information is usually limited to work-related topics and is usually one-sided. When employer and employee try to become "friends," problems often arise.)

4. How are father-child relationships different from friendships? What are some of the things that destroy this type of relationship? (Parents are legally responsible for the care of their children. Children do not have the emotional and intellectual capacity of adults, and most look to their parents for guidance and direction. Children should not be used as friends or confidants. If parents fail to consider this, problems are likely to arise.)
5. How do relationships vary within families? (For example, how does the way in which parents and children relate differ from the way in which brothers and sisters relate? How do relationships in a three- or four-generation family differ from relationships in a family that is composed of only a single mother and her children? How do family relationships differ from one cultural group to another?)
6. Considering your relationships with friends, children, family members, and employers, which type of relationship is hardest to maintain? Why?
7. How hard is it for you to have a good relationship with the mother of your children and with *her* family, friends, and others in your children's lives?
8. How have all these relationships changed as you grew older? Overall, are your relationships more satisfying than they were, or less satisfying?
9. How would you describe the relationships that have formed in this peer support group?
10. How would your child, boss, or romantic partner describe your qualities in the relationships they have with you?
11. How do your relationships influence your decisions and choices? (For example, do you make choices about how you spend your time based on your responsibilities as a father, romantic partner, or employee?)
12. What, if anything, do you feel you have to work on to be a better friend, romantic partner, father, or employee?
13. What do your relationships with other adults teach your children?

The Relationship Scale

Purpose: To evaluate the effectiveness of participants' relationships with important people in their lives. To establish goals to improve their important relationships.

Materials: Handout, "Setting Goals to Improve Relationships"; paper and pencils (for everyone).

Time: 40-50 minutes.

Planning Note: When conducting this activity, it is important to help the fathers who do not visit their children think about what has gone wrong in their relationships with their children and to identify ways to improve these relationships. When completing the handout "Setting Goals to Improve Relationships," fathers in this situation may need to think about how to reestablish communication with their children's mother before they can arrange to visit their children. It is important that the fathers see how *not* having a relationship with their children will affect the children's lives. That is, they need to evaluate their "non-relationship" with their children.

Procedure: Begin by stating that in Activity 10-2 the men identified which qualities are important in different kinds of relationships. Now they will assess whether their real relationships demonstrate those qualities. Make the point that everyone has some relationships that are going well and others that need improvement. This activity will help the fathers identify relationships that need improvement and then develop a plan to make positive changes. Explain that certain people can strongly influence whether or not the participants will succeed as fathers — for example, their children's mothers and grandparents, their romantic partners, and even their employers. Admit that some of these relationships will never be perfect, but emphasize that the fathers can work to make each relationship as positive as possible, given the circumstances involved.

Distribute paper and pencils, asking each participant to list the five most important or most highly valued relationships in their lives. (Responses may include anyone — the participant's children, mother or father, grandparents, other family members, best friends, or employer.) Then ask each man to list:

- Three reasons why these relationships are so important
- Three ways that his life is affected (or might be affected) when these relationships do not function well.

Encourage the men to be honest, and ask them to evaluate each of their five relationships, using the list of important qualities from Activity 10-2. How many of these qualities are present in each relationship? Tell the men to rate each relationship on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 = messed up and 5 = fantastic) and to write the rating next to each relationship. After approximately 10 minutes, ask for a volunteer to describe one relationship that is working well for him (that he rated 4 or 5). Ask him to describe specifically what makes that relationship work: What's good about the relationship? What role does he play in making it a good relationship? What role does the other person play? How well does the other person know him? How does he think the other person would rate the relationship? What, if anything, might make this relationship even better?

Next, ask for a volunteer to discuss a relationship that needs improvement (that he rated 3 or less). Again, ask for specifics: What's wrong with this relationship? What role do you play in this? What role does the other person play? How important is it to you that this relationship be improved? How would you (or your child, partner, etc.) benefit if this relationship were better? What would you like to change in this relationship?

Distribute the handout "Setting Goals to Improve Relationships." Review it with the whole group, using one volunteer's situation as an example. First, have the group help the volunteer establish a goal for improving his relationship (What, exactly, would he like to change?). Then have the group identify the steps he can take to accomplish this goal (for example, ask the other person to talk about the relationship; make a point of showing up on time; follow through on his word; find a way to avoid arguments; etc.). Finally, the group should help the volunteer list the skills that he will need to accomplish his goal. Examples of skills might include: listening; compromising (being able to give and take); using "I" statements (telling the other person what he feels about the person's behavior); conflict management (resolving conflicts without violence); patience and assertiveness (standing up for himself and expressing his true feelings while making an effort to be considerate of the other person's feelings).

Finally, ask each participant to complete the handout, setting goals to improve one important relationship. Acknowledge that relationship problems are *always* caused by both parties. Although one person cannot control the other's behavior, both people can control *themselves*. Often, when one person makes changes in the relationship, it leads to changes in the other person. Encourage patience, pointing out that change sometimes happens slowly. Things may even get worse before they get better, because both people are accustomed to their old behavior. If the relationship is valuable, however, the effort to improve it will benefit both parties.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What steps have you taken in the past that have strengthened your important relationships? (Ask for specific examples of relationships with friends, custodial parents, children, family members, and employers.)
2. What things have you done in relationships that have not worked so well? (Again, ask for specific examples of the types of relationships covered today.)
3. What happens when you are in a relationship that you would rather not negotiate (such as with your children's mother or your employer)? Do you have to accept that relationship as it is? Or can you make changes in yourself that might improve the relationship?
4. What goals have you set to improve your relationships? Can you think of anything else that might help you?
5. How do you know when a relationship is not going to work (or is not right for you)? What do you do when you know this? Can you think of anything else that you might do?
6. Have you ever had to end a relationship that was not right for you? (Again, get examples of all types of relationships.) What was this like? How did you end the relationship?
7. Did you ever have an important relationship that was taken away or ended by somebody else? What was this like? What did you do about it?
8. In the future, how do you see your relationships changing? (For example, how will your relationship with your children change as they get older? If you don't have contact with your children now, do you expect this to change as your children get older?) What do you think will make a difference in these relationships? (For example, do you think paying child support, establishing regular visits with your children, or having a better job will change your relationships with them?)

Setting Goals to Improve Relationships

Relationship with

✏ *Identify the person here*

My Goal

Be specific and realistic in setting goals. For example:

- I want to increase the amount of time I spend with my child.
- I want to stop fighting so much with my child's grandmother.

My goal:

✏ *Write your goal here*

Steps to Accomplish This Goal

1. I will

✏ *Write what action you will take*

by

✏ *Date*

2. I will

✏ *Action*

by

✏ *Date*

(Continued on page 13)

Skills Needed to Improve This Relationship

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

4. ______________________________

5. ______________________________

Feedback/Wrap-up

Ask the following questions to talk about today's session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What, if anything, have you learned about your current relationships?
2. What ideas did you get today about ways to improve your relationships?
3. In what specific ways can you use today's information in your important relationships?

Tell the men that they will continue to talk about relationships in Session 11. Ask them to think about their romantic relationships. What have they liked about these relationships, and what have they wanted to change? Thank the fathers for their participation, and remind them of when the next session meets.

Understanding Male-Female Relationships

Activity **11-1**	**What's New?**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **11-2**	**What Works, and What Gets in the Way?**	☞ **20-30 minutes**
Activity **11-3**	**What I Value in a Partner**	☞ **50-60 minutes**
	or	
Activity **11-4**	**Relationship Dilemmas**	☞ **50-60 minutes**
	or	
Activity **11-5**	**How Well Do You Know Your Partner?**	☞ **50-60 minutes**
Activity **11-6**	**Women Speak Out**	☞ **70-90 minutes**
	or	
Activity **11-7**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Key Concepts

- A good male-female relationship involves two people who feel good about themselves, care about each other, and are considerate of each other's feelings and needs. It takes a lot of time and energy to make a relationship work.
- As individuals, men and women have varied opinions about what they desire in a friendship or a romantic relationship. In choosing a partner, it is important to think about what you value in a relationship.
- Men and women generally have different styles of communicating. These styles sometimes conflict, making it hard for men and women to understand each other unless they communicate honestly and openly and can come to appreciate each other's point of view.
- Individuals bring all their past experiences with them when they begin a relationship. Past experiences often result in obligations that may affect current relationships.
- Parents need to think about how their relationships affect their children's lives. Adults can teach children the benefits of having relationships that are loving, cooperative, and successful.

Men and women need to make the effort to get to know each other's likes, dislikes, and opinions. The more you try to know someone, the more you communicate that you care.

Materials Checklist

Activity 11-2 What Works, and What Gets in the Way?

☐ Newsprint

☐ Marker

Activity 11-3 What I Value in a Partner

☐ Leader Resource, "What I Value in a Partner"

☐ Play money

☐ Newsprint

☐ Marker

Activity 11-4 Relationship Dilemmas

☐ Handout, "Differences in Communication Styles"

☐ Leader Resource, "Dear Jake" (copy for each group)

☐ Five index cards

Activity **11-5** How Well Do You Know Your Partner?

☐ Handout, "How Well Do You Know Your Partner?"

☐ Pencils (for everyone)

Activity **11-6** Women Speak Out

☐ Extra chairs (for guest panel)

☐ Handout, "Sample Questions for Women"

☐ Newsprint

☐ Markers

What's New?

Ask the following questions to remind the fathers of what they talked about in the last session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Will somebody please summarize what we talked about in the last session?
2. What were your reactions to the last session? Did anything we talked about change how you view the people who are important to you? If so, what has changed?
3. Did you have any experiences this week where you felt good about your relationships? If so, tell us about it. Did any of you have experiences where you weren't sure whether a relationship was right for you? If so, what was that like?
4. Did you talk with your partner, friend, or child about what you learned in the last session? If so, what responses did you get?
5. Have you been thinking about your various relationships? What, if anything, have you discovered?
6. Has anybody tried to carry out his goals for improving relationships that are not working? If so, what happened?

Say something like, "At the end of the last session, I asked you to think about your romantic relationships, either past or current. It's important to know which things you like about a romantic relationship and which things don't work out so well for you. Our first activity today is to brainstorm about all the things that make romantic relationships work — and the things that get in the way."

What Works, and What Gets in the Way?

Purpose: To identify ways to build romantic relationships and make them work. To identify roadblocks that participants have experienced or might experience in male-female relationships.

Materials: Newsprint and marker.

Time: 20-30 minutes.

Procedure: Explain that today's session will focus on male-female relationships. Acknowledge that not all romantic relationships are heterosexual, but note that relationships between men and women are the most common and can shed light on any kind of partnership.

Ask the men what they think about relationships between men and women in today's world. What do they think is good about today's relationships? What do they think often goes wrong? Then ask them to brainstorm about the following three questions (and record their responses on newsprint):

- How are men and women the same?
- How are men and women different?
- What makes it difficult for men and women to have successful relationships with each other?

After you have recorded these responses, ask the group to brainstorm about a final question, and again record the responses:

- What can men and women do to build good relationships?

Have the men assess their responses by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Do women and men usually see things the same way? If not, what are some differences between them?
2. What makes some romantic relationships good while others don't seem to work? What overall factors seem to be important?
3. What do you think are the major causes of problems between men and women?
4. Which of the things that help build good relationships have been present in your relationships with women?
5. Which of the problems in relationships with women have you experienced?
6. How likely is it that previous relationships "get in the way" of new relationships? Why does this happen? What do you do?
7. What role do your children play in your romantic relationships? Do they "get in the way"? Or do they help you build relationships? What can make a difference in the role your children play?
8. How do such things as financial or custodial obligations to your children or your personal obligations to family, friends, and employers get in the way of romantic relationships?
9. Is equality important in male-female relationships? Why, or why not?
10. How would you define a relationship that is "really good"? How important is it that people in a relationship love each other?

What I Value in a Partner

Purpose: To help the men identify the qualities they appreciate in romantic relationships and the qualities that they value in their partners.

Materials: Leader Resource, "What I Value in a Partner"; play money; newsprint and marker.

Time: 50-60 minutes.

Planning Note: This activity gives the men an opportunity to think about what they value in romantic relationships. For those who are involved in a relationship now, the activity will help them explore what makes the relationship work (or not work), and what it means to be committed to someone in "bad times as well as good times." It is also important to help the fathers explore how their romantic relationships affect their children.

Write this sentence on newsprint and post it: "When I think about being in a relationship, I value someone who ______________________."

The Leader Resource "What I Value in a Partner" lists a variety of statements that might be used for the values auction. You should include enough such statements so that everyone can bid for at least two "values"; choose or create statements that represent the circumstances of the men in your group. Before the activity, write the statements on newsprint.

Procedure: Tell the men that in this activity they will identify the qualities that are important to them in a romantic partner. Ask them how they would define the word "value." If necessary, explain that a value is something you believe in, is important to you, and often guides your decisions and behavior. (If the group did the "Values Auction" in Activity 7-3, remind the men of the experience.) Ask them for an example of something they value. Tell them that you would like them to fill in the blank for the following statement (posted on newsprint): "When I think about being in a relationship, I value someone who ______________." Record all their responses on newsprint and save it for after the auction.

Describe an auction and how it works (or ask those who participated in the "Values Auction" to do this). Then give each participant $300 in play money, and tell the men to look over the posted list of behaviors and characteristics for a romantic partner and decide which ones they would like to "buy." Indicate that they may bid as much as $300 or as little as $20 for each quality, and that the person with the highest bid "buys" the statement being auctioned. Tell them that they can bid only in increments of $20, and that you don't make change.

Serve as the auctioneer and timekeeper, and allow one minute to auction off each statement. Read each statement aloud in a positive manner. When the time is up, the group member with the highest bid wins that item (write his name and the amount of his bid next to the item). If the group is small, limit the number of statements to the ones that are most important to the men (based on previous activities) to ensure that individuals buy only the values that are truly important to them.

After all the items have been bought (or no one has any money), point out contradictions in certain statements. For example, the men may be eager to buy "A partner who accepts my children as her own" and yet may not want "A partner who has children from another relationship."

Then ask the following questions to help the men think about the *qualities* that their partner might need in order to be like the person described in the statements they "bought."

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Why did you want the particular statements you bought?
2. Which were the three best-selling statements? Why did most of you want them?
3. Which statements went unsold? Why do you think these were not chosen?
4. Which statements best describe real-life relationships?
5. Which statements most closely describe your current (or most recent) partner?
6. Do any of the statements you chose contradict each other?
7. What is the most important quality that a romantic partner should have? Why?
8. What happens when the person you are involved with doesn't have the qualities you say are important? Do you think that a partner can change or develop the qualities you want over time? Why or why not? How willing are you to accept things about your partner that you may not like?
9. Have you ever changed things about yourself because of a romantic relationship? If so, what did you change? How much can your partner influence the qualities you have or value?
10. Does being a noncustodial father affect your romantic relationships? If so, how? (For instance, do your obligations to pay child support or your visitation schedules interfere with your efforts to develop relationships? If so, how?)

Leader Resource

What I Value in a Partner

___ A partner who is good-looking.
___ A partner who has a nice personality.
___ A partner who is of the same religious background as me.
___ A partner who has children from another relationship.
___ A partner who accepts my children as her own.
___ A partner who is patient and understanding.
___ A partner who wants to have children with me.
___ A partner who does not want to have any children.
___ A partner who devotes all her time to me.
___ A partner who puts a high value on education.
___ A partner who has a good job and supports herself.
___ A partner who loves me for who I am.
___ A partner who wants to stay home and care for her children.
___ A partner who is willing to raise my children.
___ A partner who supports me in my efforts to better myself.
___ A partner who loves me no matter what I do.
___ A partner who respects me as head of the household.
___ A partner who puts me before her family.
___ A partner who is strict with her kids.
___ A partner who is independent.
___ A partner who allows me to do my own thing.
___ A partner who is willing to help support my children financially.

___ A partner I can talk with about anything.
___ A partner who does not interfere with my relationship with my child's mother.
___ A partner who does not get jealous.
___ A partner who is willing to do the cooking and cleaning.
___ A partner who watches over her finances in order to save money for the future.
___ A partner who is not worried about having material things.
___ A partner I can trust and depend on.
___ A partner who is easygoing and flexible.
___ A partner who can fix things around the house.
___ A partner who likes to spend time on her own.
___ A partner who accepts that I have child support obligations.
___ A partner who satisfies me sexually.
___ A partner who likes sports.
___ A partner who pushes me to do things.
___ A partner who has confidence in me.
___ A partner who likes my friends.
___ A partner who does most things "all right" (basically OK, but not terrific).
___ A partner who enjoys having sex.
___ A partner who will talk with me about her problems.
___ A partner who knows everything about me.
___ A partner who makes me feel good about myself.
___ A partner who does not expect me to support her.
___ A partner who sticks by me in bad times as well as good.
___ A partner who feels good about herself.

Relationship Dilemmas

Purpose:.To increase participants' awareness of common dilemmas in male-female relationships and possible ways to resolve them.

Materials: Handout, "Differences in Communication Styles"; Leader Resource, "Dear Jake" (copy for each group); five index cards.

Time: 50-60 minutes.

Planning Note: Read the handout "Differences in Communication Styles" and the Leader Resource "Dear Jake" in advance. If possible, read *You Just Don't Understand* by Deborah Tannen (William Morrow and Company, 1990); or *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus,* by John Gray (Harper Collins, 1993). Become familiar with differences in how men and women view the world and in how they communicate.

From the Leader Resource, choose three to five letters that are appropriate for your group. Copy these onto separate cards. (If some men have difficulty reading, either select a reader for each small group or read each group's letter aloud.) Post the following questions on newsprint:

- What is the problem?
- How do you think the person feels?
- What do you think the person should do? Why?

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How easy if it for you to ask for help? Do you usually ask for help directly, or do you hint around that you need help?
2. How often do you get support from people without having to ask? (Discuss examples.)
3. What keeps you from asking someone for help? (Are you shy? Embarrassed? Too proud?)
4. What kind of support do you need from people in order to be a successful father? (Solicit examples involving their children's mother, parents, and relatives as well as friends, counselors, and employers.)
5. In Session 16, "Taking Care of Business," we did an activity called "The Mirror" (Activity 16-2). Some of you had cracks in your mirror images of yourselves. Do you think that asking for support from family and friends could help you to "fix" these cracks? Why, or why not?
6. We've talked about situations in which someone gave you support. Has anyone ever come to *you* to get support? (Discuss examples.) How did it feel to help someone else out?
7. Can you think of any situations in which it is a bad idea to ask for support? (Examples: when asking for support means not taking responsibility for yourself; when support allows you to "give up" without trying.)

Who's in Your Support Network?

Purpose: To help participants identify the people and agencies in their support networks. To describe the characteristics of supportive relationships.

Materials: Handout, "Creating a Support System"; pencils (for everyone).

Time: 20-25 minutes.

Procedure: Explain that the next activity will help the men identify which people and agencies make up their support network. Introduce and define this concept by asking, "Which people and agencies help you and your children by listening, caring, and giving their time and sometimes financial assistance?"

Ask the participants to complete the handout "Creating a Support System." Read and explain the headings on the handout, and give the men the following instructions:

1. On the first page, list all the people with whom you have regular contact. Include family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, counselors, people in your community, etc.
2. Go over your list, and put a *check mark* next to everyone who is supportive *in general*. (Is this person trustworthy? Can you ask this person to do a favor? Can you talk over your problems with this person?)
3. *Circle* the names of those people who make you feel most comfortable and who know a lot about you and would help you out.
4. *Cross out* the names of people who are *not* supportive of you (those who put you down or are critical of you).
5. Put a *question mark* next to the names of people whose support is uncertain or unknown. When you have finished, some people will have more than one mark next to their names.

Now ask the fathers to consider only the names that are not crossed out. Next to each name, ask them to list a quality which makes that person seem like a supporter. (Examples: is a good listener; is there when I need help; is nonjudgmental; makes me laugh; will offer financial help; gives me his or her time.)

Next, go through the rest of the handout with the fathers, asking them to identify which people they would turn to in the various situations described. After completing the handout, tell the fathers to hang on to this list, so that they can remember all the people who are part of their support network.

Discuss the activity by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What are your reactions to this activity? (For example, were you surprised? Disappointed? Pleased with the people you identified as part of your support network?)
2. Which of these is harder for you?
   - Asking for emotional support (someone to listen, give advice, etc.)
   - Asking for specific help (such as money, babysitting, a ride, etc.)
3. Who are the key people in your support network? (Which names did you circle or check off?)
4. How would you describe your relationships with these people? How much give-and-take is there in these relationships? (Do you both help each other, or does one of you usually do the helping?)
5. In general, how do these people respond when you ask for help or support?
6. If you get support, does that make you dependent on others? Or can it be seen as "taking care of business"?
7. If you had a magic wand, how would you change the relationships in your support network? How would you improve them? What role do you play if these relationships don't always work? (For example, do you sometimes take advantage of your supporters? Do you at times fail to fulfill your responsibilities? Is support a "one-way street"?)

8. Which agencies (clinics, schools, social service programs) have given you help? How do you feel about getting help from these agencies?
9. What do you do when people turn down your request for help?
10. Which of the qualities you listed for your supporters could be used to describe you?
11. How reliable are you? What changes in your behavior would make you more reliable? (For example, do you show up when you are expected somewhere? Do you fail to keep promises?)
12. What would your children say about how much they can rely on you for support?

HANDOUT

Session **18**
Activity **3**

Creating a Support Network

People in My Support Network

Name	Quality
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Problems and Solutions

If I were sick, I could call ____________________

If my child were sick, I would call: ____________________

If I needed money, I would call: ____________________

If my child were doing poorly in school, I would call: ____________________

If I had a bad fight with my partner or boss, I would call: ____________________

If I lost my job, I would call: ____________________

If I wanted company, I would call: ____________________

If I wanted to talk, I would call: ____________________

HANDOUT

Session **18**
Activity **3**

If I needed a place to stay, I would call: ______________________________

If I had good news, I would call: ______________________________

If I needed a job, I would call: ______________________________

Fill in the blanks.

If I needed ______________, I would call: ______________________________

If I needed ______________, I would call: ______________________________

If I needed ______________, I would call: ______________________________

Complete the following statements.

I'm going to ask ______________ to ______________________________

______________________________ for me.

If I get the help I ask for, ______________________________

______________________________.

If my request is turned down, ______________________________

______________________________.

Negotiating for Support

Purpose: To increase participants' understanding of the attitudes and feelings of people who are in their support network. To identify effective ways to ask for help.

Materials: Handout, "Asking for Support: Case Studies"; newsprint and marker.

Time: 30-35 minutes.

Planning Note: Option 1 of this activity uses cases studies and role plays to help the men understand the viewpoints of people in their support network. If the men are reluctant to see the other person's side in their relationships and often have trouble seeing their role in conflicts, choose option 1. On the other hand, if the biggest problem seems to be the men's inability to ask for help — and if they can describe situations in which they tried (or wanted to try) to get help but did not know how — choose option 2. (If time permits, you can also combine both options by first doing the role plays and then having the men practice asking for help in the real-life situations that they have described.)

If time is limited or participants prefer to work in a large group, keep everyone together, and discuss some of the case studies and real-life situations. Ask the men how they view each situation and what they think the father should do. Try to focus attention on the other person's point of view in the situation.

As the actors are role-playing the situations, ask questions that help focus the role play and move it along.

Optional Procedure: Introduce this activity by saying something like, "We've spent time identifying the people who are in your support networks. Relationships with some of these people may be strained, and we may not always feel that they are willing to help as much as they could. Even our supporters may complain about us and feel that we don't always do our part in the relationship." Ask whether anyone has ever experienced such a conflict, and take approximately five minutes to discuss these situations. Then say, "This activity will give you a chance to look at situations from both points of view — that of the father who needs help and that of the person who might provide it."

Tell participants that they will be role-playing in this activity and that they should have to give themselves over completely to the characters they are playing. They will work in small groups to plan the role plays and then will perform them for the whole group.

Divide participants into small groups, and distribute the handout "Asking for Support: Case Studies." Then assign a situation to each group, and allow approximately 10 minutes to plan the role play. Each group should select actors to play the roles, and the other members can offer suggestions for lines and help the actors rehearse. The actors should express the feelings of the characters they are playing.

After 10 minutes, reconvene the large group. Ask the small groups to perform their role plays and to begin by reading the case study aloud.

After each role play, discuss the following questions, asking the actors to respond first.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How did each of the characters feel during the role play?
2. How well did the characters listen to each other?
3. Did the support-giver make it easy or hard to ask for help? Why?
4. What other things could the father have said to convince the support-giver to help him out?
5. What could the father do or say to be more understanding of the support-giver's feelings?
6. For those of you who played the role of the father, if you put yourself in the other person's shoes, would you give the father what he wanted? Why, or why not?
7. Do these situations happen in real life? Are your real-life situations with friends and family like these case studies or different?
8. When you get into situations like these, how do things usually go? What goes well? What doesn't?

Asking for Support: Case Studies

SITUATION 1: BETTY AND BRIAN

Betty: You are 36 years old. Over the past year, you have been caring for your son Brian's two-year-old daughter, Shamika. You really wish Brian would not depend on you so much. So much of your money goes to him and Shamika that you haven't bought yourself a new dress in over six months. However, Brian is your only child, and you love being a grandmother. Your friend Dora thinks that you are ruining Brian and are helping to make him irresponsible. You agree with her, but you can't imagine what Brian and Shamika would do without you. The thought of someone else taking care of Shamika really concerns you.

Brian: You are 21 and have recently obtained your GED. You and your daughter Shamika are living with your mother. Shamika's mother, Angie, has been in a drug treatment program for the past year, which has really put all the child care duties on your shoulders. You'd like to find a program and learn a trade, but you want to take your time and find the right school. Your mother provides for both you and Shamika, so you don't feel any pressure to do anything quickly. Just last week, your mother brought Shamika over $200 worth of new clothes. You think your mother is great, and you feel very close to her. The two of you talk a lot, and in some ways you feel that your mother is taking better care of Shamika than you and Angie ever could.

Create a role play in which you ask your mother for $500 to buy a used car.

SITUATION 2: ALEX AND CARL

Alex: You are a 50-year-old bus driver. Your 17-year-old son, Carl, has recently become a father. You have always told Carl that you wanted him to make something out of his life and maybe to become a professional. Carl has disappointed you, but you still feel the need to support him. However, you have decided that you won't do certain things for him. For example, you have agreed to let him live with you rent-

(Continued on page 16)

free, but you refuse to give him money. Your wife, Yvonne, tells you that you shouldn't be so hard on Carl. She reminds you of the days when you and she were young parents. You understand her concerns, but you also believe that a man has a responsibility to provide for himself and his family.

Carl: You're a 17-year-old father. You didn't want to have a baby, and you thought that your girlfriend, Tonya, was taking birth control pills. You pay Tonya a small amount every month for child support. It's not a lot, but it's all you can afford right now, because you're in a job training program and can only work part time. Your father is upset by the situation and has not been speaking to you lately. Today, Tonya called you in a panic because the baby has strep throat. She asked if you could pay for the prescription because she hasn't been able to get a Medicaid card yet. You decide to ask your father for help, even though he has made it clear that he won't give you any money.

Create a role play in which you explain to your father that you need his support in this special situation.

SITUATION 3: TERRANCE AND KENNY

Terrance: You are a 23-year-old father who is currently employed at a small computer firm. It's a good job that pays pretty well. Things have been tough for you over the past year or so. Your girlfriend had a baby, and you are spending more and more time hanging out and drinking. At first, the drinking made everything easier. Now, you're facing a lot of problems. Your girlfriend is so disgusted with you that she won't even let you see the baby.

Your boss has noticed that you're drinking on the job and she has referred you to the Employee Assistance Program. You're really scared that you might lose your job. You're also really scared that you might have a serious drinking problem. Both of your parents drink too much. This is something that you and your older cousin Kenny used to talk about a lot. He was a big support to you when you were kids. You decide to talk things over with Kenny because he is family and will keep your business to himself.

Kenny: You are 27, married, and have a five-year-old son. You are very family-oriented and have accomplished more than any of the other children in your family.

Everyone looks up to you. People seem to be drawn to you. Many people come to you with their problems because you are so open and don't judge them. Recently your aunt called you to tell you that your cousin Terrance was having a lot of problems. Today he calls you and asks whether he can come by and talk with you.

Create a role play in which the two men talk about Terrance's drinking.

SITUATION 4: RONALD AND MR. GOMEZ

Ronald: You are 32 years old and have three children. You don't live with your children's mother, Annie, but you try to visit once or twice a week. Lately, whenever you visit, you've noticed that Annie is usually sleeping. The place is a mess, the kids are always raggy-looking, and there is hardly any food in the house. Whenever you try to talk with Annie, she just shrugs you off and tells you that she's tired. You begin to wonder if maybe she's doing drugs or something, but you're afraid to ask. Just last week you started going to a program for fathers, and that social worker, Mr. Gomez, seemed pretty cool. Even though you don't trust social workers very much, you decide to ask him for some advice about Annie and the kids.

Mr. Gomez: You are the social worker who is responsible for providing counseling services for the fathers in your group. So far, very few men have come to see you, because the program is fairly new. You've been working hard at getting to know the guys in the program, because you really want to see this program work. But you know that the men are still testing you to see how you handle things.

Create a role play in which Ronald asks Mr. Gomez what he should do about Annie and his kids.

SITUATION 5: STEVE AND MR. WHEELER

Steve: You are 29 years old and the father of two boys, three-year-old Steven and 10-month-old Christopher. You've been working from 4 P.M. to midnight at the Post Office for the past four years. You've always been a good worker, and you get along OK with your boss, Mr. Wheeler. The only problem with him is that he hates it when anyone asks him to change the schedule, since it affects everything else on his shift. Recently, however, you started to think about going back to school. You are tired of

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sorting mail, and you are sick of the evening shift. You never get to spend time with your kids, and you have no social life. You found out about an electricians' training program that you would like to get into, but it meets in the evening, and you can't afford to quit your job.

Mr. Wheeler: As a supervisor at the Post Office for 19 years, you've seen a lot of people come and go. Some of them were good workers, but others made your job really difficult because they didn't seem to care about their work. Among your current employees, you like Steve, because he's always reliable. You would hate to see him go.

Create a role play in which Steve asks Mr. Wheeler to change his schedule.

SITUATION 6: ANTHONY AND FELICIA

Anthony: You are a 36-year-old father with four children. You are about to be released from prison after doing time for drug charges. While you were in prison, you got your GED and completed an office machine repair course. You also attended AA meetings almost every day. For the first time in your life, you feel as though you can make something of yourself, if only someone will give you a chance. The first orders of business are to find a place to live and to get a job. Then you can start visiting your kids again. You plan to talk with your sister Felicia, who has always been there for you whenever you had a problem.

Felicia: You are 34 years old; you have three children, and you live in a two-bedroom housing project. You've been struggling to make ends meet for your kids on the salary you earn in the toy factory, where you have worked for seven years. Life has been hard, but you believe that the Lord will be good to you if you are good to others. Often, however, you feel that people — especially men — take advantage of your kindness. You have three brothers, but none of them has called you in over a year.

Create a role play in which Anthony asks Felicia whether he can stay with her until he gets his feet on the ground.

SITUATION 7: JOHNNY AND NANCY

Johnny: You are a 29-year-old father of two children from different relationships. You are still married to the mother of your first child, although you haven't seen your wife or your four-year-old son in two years. You see your second child, Christine, every week, and you are still involved with her mother, Nancy. You pay her about $100 a month for child support. You haven't sent any money to your wife and son, because you just haven't had any since Christine was born. Your wife calls and asks you to send money to help pay for an operation that your son needs.

Nancy: You are a 23-year-old single mother with a two-year-old daughter, Christine. You don't work right now, but you do receive state support, and Christine's father gives you $100 a month to cover the part of the rent that welfare won't pay. You know that Johnny doesn't make much money, but he wants you to live in a nice place, and it's the least he can do for his daughter.

Create a role play in which Johnny asks Nancy whether he can skip this month's child support so that he can send money to his son.

SITUATION 8: STANLEY AND MRS. JONES

Stanley: You are a 22-year-old father who has been enrolled in a GED program for the last two years. You expect to pass your test this month, and you plan to go to college in the fall. Your child's mother, Michelle, is 18 years old and is pregnant again. When Michelle told her mother that she was pregnant, her mother told her that she would have to leave. The social worker has found Michelle a shelter for pregnant women, but no children are allowed to stay there. Although you have been with Michelle for three years, your mom doesn't like her, and she has also been very reluctant to spend time with her grandchild.

Mrs. Jones: You are a 56-year-old woman who has raised four sons. Although the first three were always in trouble with drugs and the law, your youngest son, Stanley, has been your pride and joy and may even go to college. But you don't like his girlfriend, Michelle, because you feel that she brings him down.

Create a role play in which Stanley asks his mother whether he can bring his daughter, Stephanie, to live with them for a while.

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SITUATION 9: PEDRO AND MARIE

Pedro: You are a 26-year-old father who has been working as a messenger for the past three years. You hate your job, but you didn't have the skills to do anything else. Out of the $150 you bring home each week, you give your daughter's mother $50. You recently heard of a job training program in electrical work and carpentry that also offers GED classes. You've always been good with your hands, and you think this program would be great for you. Since the cutoff age for this program is 26, you have to enroll now, or you can forget it.

Marie: You are a 24-year-old mother who has been working full time as a secretary since your daughter was three months old. You bring home $180 a week, which barely covers your own expenses. Without the $50 a week that you get from Pedro, you'd never make it. You use this money to pay your mother to watch your daughter.

Create a role play in which Pedro asks Marie whether he can stop giving her money for a while so that he can attend the job training program.

Optional Procedure: Instead of using the case studies on the handout, ask the fathers to brainstorm a list of situations in which they ask someone for support or assistance. (The list of needs could include money, a job, a place to stay, something to eat, a ride, something they want to borrow, babysitting for their child, etc.) Post the list on newsprint, and ask for two volunteers for each situation: an asker and a person being asked. (Or, if you prefer, pair off the men, and have them take takes turns being the asker.) The man who is the asker should spend about two minutes telling his partner what he needs. The rest of the group should observe the interaction, listening carefully to *how* the asker seeks help and *how* the support-giver responds. When the two minutes are up, have the group critique the scene, focusing on how effective the asker was in making his request and, if necessary, suggesting better ways to ask for help. Continue this until everyone has had a chance to ask for something. Then discuss the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How did it feel to have to ask for something?
2. What got in the way when you tried to ask for help?
3. How did the supporter, or giver, respond to you?
4. How does it feel when you ask for something and the person turns you down?
5. How did it feel to be the giver?
6. What's it like when someone asks you for something that you don't want to give?
7. When you played the role of the asker, suppose that you were the other person instead. Would you have given what you asked for? Why or why not?
8. When you get into situations like these, how do things usually go? What goes well? What doesn't?

Feedback/Wrap-up

Ask questions to discuss today's session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. In general, what did you learn today about the people you rely on for help and support? How does the need for support fit into your plans to become self-sufficient?
2. Was it hard for any of you to think of people who are part of your support network? If so, what was hard about it? If you couldn't think of any supporters, what can you do to build supportive relationships?
3. Has any of you needed something in the past (do you need something now) that you would like to share with the group?
4. How did it feel to practice asking for help in this session?
5. As a member of this peer support group, what have you learned about asking for support or help from others? What have you learned about giving your help or support to others?
6. Do you think that you will be able to ask someone for help in the future? If not, why not?

Session **19**

Alcohol and Drug Use and Abuse

Part I

Activity **19-1**	**What's New?**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **19-2**	**How Much Do I Know About Alcohol and Drugs?**	☞ **30-45 minutes**
Activity **19-3**	**Do I Have a Problem?**	☞ **40 minutes**
Activity **19-4**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Part II

Activity **19-5**	**A Gathering of Men in Recovery**	☞ **70-90 minutes**
Activity **19-6**	Optional Activity: **Circle of Recovery**	☞ **70-90 minutes**
Activity **19-7**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**

Key Concepts

- Stresses of everyday life can lead to abuse of alcohol and drugs. People who abuse alcohol and drugs are risking serious problems with their bodies, their minds, and their feelings.
- A person's abuse of alcohol or drugs can also cause serious problems for his or her family members and friends.
- No one can force a person into drug treatment. The drinker or drug abuser must admit to having a problem and must decide to seek treatment.
- Recreational and social use of alcohol and drugs can lead to excessive use and/or addiction.
- The best motivation for avoiding drug use is being involved in other activities that give a person a sense of purpose and satisfaction.

Materials Checklist

Part I

Activity **19-2** **How Much Do I Know About Alcohol and Drugs?**

☐ Handout, "Drug and Alcohol Knowledge Test"

☐ Leader Resource, "Answer Sheet for Drug and Alcohol Knowledge Test"

☐ Leader Resource, "Some Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs"

☐ Pencils (for everyone)

☐ Marker and newsprint

Activity **19-3** **Do I Have a Problem?**

☐ Handout, "Alcohol and Drug Use: A Personal Assessment"

☐ Leader Resource, "Some Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs"

☐ Pencils (for everyone)

Part II

Activity **19-6** **Circle of Recovery**

☐ Video, *Circle of Recovery**

☐ VCR and monitor

☐ Leader Resource, "Some Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs"

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* *Circle of Recovery* was produced by Bill Moyers in 1991 and is available from Films for Humanities and Sciences. For price and ordering information, call 1-800-257-5126 or 609-419-8039 (attention: Diane Bilello). Or write to Films for Humanities and Sciences, P.O. Box 2053, Princeton, NJ 08543.

Planning Note: This session provides a forum where the men can discuss their concerns about substance use and abuse. Although the men in your program may have experienced problems with substance abuse either personally or with family members, this session should not be used as therapy or treatment. Instead, the men should be helped to evaluate whether or not their alcohol or drug use is causing problems in their lives. If someone does admit to having a problem, the group should respond with empathy but should not attempt to solve his problem. Only he can do that; he should therefore be referred to the case manager or to appropriate counseling in the community.

To create enough time for the activities that follow, it is recommended that you cover this topic in two group sessions. The first session can include "What's New?" (Activity 19-1), "How Much Do I Know About Alcohol and Drugs?" (Activity 19-2), and "Do I Have a Problem?" (Activity 19-3). Spend some time asking the men to talk about their experiences with addiction, whether personal or involving family members, partners, or friends. If for the next session you plan to invite guests from a drug treatment program or from Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, use the remaining time in this session to develop a list of questions or issues that the men would like the guests to address.

In the second session on this topic, either conduct a meeting with guest speakers (Activity 19-5), or show the video *Circle of Recovery* (Activity 19-6), followed by a discussion. Prepare a list of local resources where the men can go if they feel they need to talk with someone about their own or a family member's substance abuse.

Read the Leader Resource "Some Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs" (pages 28 to 34) before the session, and if possible obtain pamphlets from local drug and alcohol treatment facilities.

As in your other peer support meetings, begin by briefly reviewing what the men discussed in the last session. Set aside 10 to 15 minutes for "What's New?" (Activity 19-1).

Part I

What's New?

Planning Note: Tailor the following questions so that you're asking the fathers about specific concepts, ideas, and skills related to building a support network that they reviewed in Session 18, "Building a Support Network: Who's on Your Side?" Invite each participant to name two or three people (or agencies) they rely on for support.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Could someone please volunteer to summarize what we discussed in the last session?
2. Did you identify any additional people that you can rely on for support?
3. Have you had any opportunities this week to provide help or support to others? If so, how did it go?
4. For those of you who have trouble asking for help, can you think of situations that happened this week where you needed support? If so, how might you begin to ask for help?
5. Overall, how might you improve your ability to ask for or give support?

How Much Do I Know About Alcohol and Drugs?*

Purpose: To help participants assess their knowledge of the effects of drugs and alcohol. To improve their understanding of the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol.

Materials: Handout, "Drug and Alcohol Knowledge Test"; Leader Resource, "Answer Sheet for Drug and Alcohol Knowledge Test"; pencils (for everyone); marker and newsprint.

Time: 20-30 minutes.

Procedure: Tell the men that today's session will help them think about their current use of alcohol and drugs. Say something like: "Deciding whether or not to drink or use drugs is a personal choice that each of us has to make, but dependency or addiction often brings serious consequences. Today we are going to talk about why people use drugs and alcohol, and then we will test how much we know about these substances. You will have an opportunity to evaluate your current use of drugs and alcohol and to assess how your use has affected your life and the lives of your family and friends."

Depending on whether you plan to use Activity 19-5 or 19-6, say something like, "In the next session we will explore the struggles of overcoming addictions with some invited guests who are fighting that battle" (or "We will watch a video about some African-American men in a recovery group").

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*Adapted from Carol Hunter-Geboy, Pamela Wilson, and Kay Sherwood, *New Chance Life Skills and Opportunities Curriculum* (New York: MDRC and Public/Private Ventures), draft of August 19, 1992.

Start by asking the men to brainstorm all the reasons why people drink or use drugs. Post their list on newsprint. Here are some typical responses:

Reasons Why People Use Alcohol or Drugs

- To socialize
- To feel high
- To relax
- To reduce stress or feel calm
- To "fit in" with other people who are using
- To avoid feeling depressed, anxious, or worried
- To escape problems at home or work
- To build up the courage to do something (such as having sex or confronting someone who made us angry)
- To satisfy the urges of dependency or addiction

After the brainstorming is complete, ask the men to react to the list. How do they feel about the reasons why people use alcohol or drugs? Do they agree that substances really accomplish these goals? (Sometimes, yes; most times, no.) Admit that many people are able to use alcohol and even some other drugs in moderation. But make it clear that excessive use and abuse always cause problems.

Next, ask the men to brainstorm a list of signs or indicators that someone may be abusing drugs or alcohol. Here are some typical responses:

Signs of Possible Alcohol or Drug Abuse

- Increased substance use and preoccupation with getting high
- Missing work or arriving late
- Fighting often with family, friends, and partners
- Neglecting one's health (not eating, sleeping, taking care of oneself)
- Stealing to get money to get high
- Becoming more and more irritable
- Hiding drinking/drugging behavior from others

- Spending too much money on alcohol or drugs (never having money)
- Feeling guilty about drinking or drug use
- Forgetting what happened while using alcohol or drugs

Now tell the men that they are going to participate in an activity that works like a game show to test how much they know about drugs and alcohol. You can structure this activity in three different ways:

1. **Team Competition:** Divide the men into two or more teams that will compete against each other. Using the handout "Drug and Alcohol Knowledge Test," read a question to each team, and have its members decide on an answer together. The team being questioned will get one point for each correct answer. The other teams can either agree or disagree with that answer or can pass. If they vote to agree or disagree with the first team's answer and they are correct, they also get a point. If they are incorrect, they *lose* a point. If a team decides to pass, its score is not affected. After all the teams have responded, use the Leader Resource to provide the correct answers, and reward points according to the stated rules. The team with the most points at the end of the competition wins.
2. **"Family Feud" Format:** Divide the men into two teams, and have each team send a member to the front of the room. Ask one of the questions on the handout. The first person at the front to raise his hand in response to the question gets to answer it. If he is correct, his team gets control of the questions. Continue the game by having each person on the winning team go to the front and answer a question. Set a limit of 10 seconds for answers, and award one point for each correct answer. As long as the team is answering correctly, it remains in control of the questions; but as soon as it misses *one* answer, control goes to the other team. Whenever a team regains control of the question, a new team member goes to the front to answer. Continue this process until you've asked all the questions.
3. **"Jeopardy" Format:** Assign points to each question (5, 10, 20, 50, and 100), and divide the men into three or four teams. Explain that you will ask questions; that each question is worth a certain number of points; and that the teams will compete to determine who gets to answer the question. Then ask the questions on the handout, being sure to state how much each question is worth. The first person to raise his hand gets to answer. If his answer is correct, his team wins the number of points for that question; but if his answer is incorrect, his team loses that number of points.

Choose a format for the activity, and give the men instructions after you divide them into teams. Remember that the game is just an engaging strategy to communicate information about the effects of drugs and alcohol. As you conduct the activity, make sure that you discuss the facts associated with each question. Use the Leader Resource "Some Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs" (pages 28 to 34) to assist you in giving the men correct information.

After the activity, give copies of both handouts to the men, and encourage them to share them with their friends and families. Tell them that the handouts offer valuable information that might help others who do not know the facts about the effects of drugs and alcohol.

When all the questions on the knowledge test have been answered, complete the activity by discussing the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Before doing this activity, how much did you know about drugs and alcohol?
2. What new information did you learn from this activity?
3. Do most people have *correct* information about drugs and alcohol? Or do most people know very little about them? What do you think is the most common misunderstanding that people have about using alcohol and drugs?
4. Do you think that knowing the facts about the effects of drugs and alcohol can influence someone's use? Why or why not?
5. What is the most important information you learned from this activity?
6. Is there someone in your life who should have this information? What can you do to share the information with that person?

Drug and Alcohol Knowledge Test

1. Memory blackouts are a sign of alcoholism.

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

2. The most potent form of marijuana is:

___ **a.** hashish

___ **b.** kif

___ **c.** ganja

___ **d.** mojo

3. Which drug causes the greatest number of birth defects?

___ **a.** LSD

___ **b.** marijuana

___ **c.** alcohol

___ **d.** heroin

4. Children raised in families where one parent is addicted are:

___ **a.** no more likely to become addicted

___ **b.** 50 percent more likely to become addicted

___ **c.** least likely to become addicted, because of what they have seen

5. "Ice" is a smokable form of:

___ **a.** amphetamine (speed)

___ **b.** LSD

___ **c.** cocaine

___ **d.** heroin

6. Which of the following side effects are linked to long-term use of anabolic steroids?

___ **a.** heart disease

___ **b.** impotence

___ **c.** severe acne

___ **d.** all of the above

7. Cocaine is psychologically and physically addictive.

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

8. Which of the following increases the risk of AIDS?

___ **a.** alcohol

___ **b.** cocaine

___ **c.** heroin or other drug use

___ **d.** all of the above

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9. Long-term marijuana use can cause:

___ **a.** memory loss

___ **b.** lung damage

___ **c.** reduction in sperm production

___ **d.** all of the above

10. Crack cocaine use is linked to an increase in STDs (sexually transmitted diseases).

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

11. PCP has the most unpredictable effects of any drug on the street today.

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

12. Alcohol is a:

___ **a.** depressant

___ **b.** stimulant

13. Marijuana is legal in some states.

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

14. Alcoholism is a disease which affects:

___ **a.** 1 in 3 families

___ **b.** 1 in 20 families

___ **c.** 1 in 100 families

___ **d.** 1 in 1,000 families

15. PCP is:

___ **a.** an opiate

___ **b.** a stimulant

___ **c.** a hallucinogen

___ **d.** a sedative

16. Urine tests can prove if a person is intoxicated.

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

17. Which is most likely to trigger an overdose when mixed with alcohol?

___ **a.** marijuana

___ **b.** amphetamines

___ **c.** barbiturates

18. Smoking crack produces a high that is much more intense and lasts much longer than snorting cocaine.

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

19. Because crack is so cheap, a habit is inexpensive to maintain.

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

20. Hard liquor is more addictive than beer or wine.

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

21. Heroin use can lead to addiction within:

___ **a.** minutes

___ **b.** a few weeks of daily use

___ **c.** several months of daily use

22. A mixture of heroin and cocaine that is injected is called:

___ **a.** ecstasy

___ **b.** a speedball

___ **c.** a rock

23. "Flashbacks" — when a person experiences a drug's effects without having taken the drug again — is a common result of which drug?

___ **a.** heroin

___ **b.** LSD (acid)

___ **c.** crack (cocaine)

24. Ecstasy (X, XTC, Adam, Eve):

___ **a.** increases heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature

___ **b.** suppresses appetite

___ **c.** creates a warm state of "empathy" and good feeling

___ **d.** all of the above

25. Ecstasy causes definitive brain damage in rodents and monkeys.

___ **a.** true

___ **b.** false

Leader Resource

Answer Sheet for Drug and Alcohol Knowledge Test*

1. **(a) true.** Alcohol abusers may have periods of time that they don't remember. Other people tell them that they did something, and they don't remember any of it.
2. **(a) hashish**
3. **(c) alcohol.** Babies born to women who drink too much can suffer permanent defects called Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Alcohol use during pregnancy can also cause growth retardation, miscarriage, and stillbirth.
4. **(b)** Studies have shown that children of alcoholics are 50 percent more likely to develop addictions. Some theories state that alcoholics have a different chemical makeup that is often passed from one generation to the next.
5. **(a) amphetamine.** A concentrated form of crystal methamphetamine, "ice" is smoked like crack cocaine and has many similar effects.
6. **(d) all of the above.** Steroids are synthetic versions of the male sex hormone testosterone. They can cause "steroid psychosis," which is marked by paranoia, hallucinations, and violent mood swings.
7. **(a) true.** Cocaine stimulates the central nervous system. Long-term use causes psychological and physical dependence. Withdrawal symptoms include a strong craving for the drug, fatigue, long bouts of disturbed sleep, strong hunger, irritability, and depression.
8. **(d) all of the above.** Although only heroin and other drugs that are injected with needles are linked directly to the transmission of the AIDS virus (through the sharing of needles), alcohol, cocaine, and other drugs are linked to high-risk sexual behavior that can increase the risk of HIV infection.

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*Adapted from Carol Hunter-Geboy, Pamela Wilson, and Kay Sherwood, *New Chance Life Skills and Opportunity Curriculum* (New York: MDRC and Public/Private Ventures), draft of August 19, 1992.

9. **(d) all of the above.** Research is not conclusive, but many experts believe that long-term use of marijuana is potentially dangerous and can lead to all the listed problems as well as decreased motivation (called "amotivational syndrome"), decreased production of the male sex hormone testosterone, impaired judgment, and psychological dependence.

10. **(a) true.** The use of crack cocaine is linked with high levels of sexual activity and risk-taking.

11. **(a) true.** PCP is sold under many names. Its extreme effects are unpredictable and dangerous. Large doses can cause hallucinations, delusions, amnesia, and possible overdose.

12. **(a) depressant.** Although initially a drinker feels "happy" and "up," alcohol actually depresses the central nervous system and reduces brain activity.

13. **(b) false.** As a "recreational drug," marijuana continues to be illegal in every state in the United States. In recent years, Arizona, California, and Maine have passed propositions that would allow the medical use of marijuana for illnesses such as cancer, glaucoma, and AIDS. (Marijuana stimulates appetite, which is useful for AIDS patients whose rapid weight loss is often associated with loss of appetite.)

14. **(a) 1 in 3 families**

15. **(c) a hallucinogen.** In low doses, PCP produces a state resembling alcohol intoxication with slurred speech, drowsiness, confusion, and general numbing of the extremities. At high doses, a user may experience perceptual distortions, feelings of apathy or estrangement, and isolation. Effects can last up to two weeks, and "flashbacks" may occur.

16. **(b) false.** Urine tests can only detect recent drug use. Since alcohol is eliminated by the body over a period of hours or days, a urine test cannot prove if a person was intoxicated at the time of the test. To determine if a person is intoxicated, one would test the blood alcohol level.

17. **(c) barbiturates.** These sedatives are known on the street as "downers," "reds," "nembies."

18. **(b) false.** The high from crack begins within six to eight seconds and usually fades from five to thirty minutes later. When snorted, cocaine's effects begin within a few minutes and begin to fade within an hour.

19. **(b) false.** A rock of crack can be very cheap, but its effects come and go quickly. The user starts to crave more and more and ends up spending tremendous amounts of money.

20. **(a) false.** Although the percentage of alcohol may vary, hard liquor, beer, and wine are all addictive. A 12-ounce can of beer has the same amount of alcohol as a 4-ounce glass of wine or a "shot" (1 ounce) of whiskey.

21. **(b) a few weeks of daily use.** Heroin users can quickly become tolerant of the drug's effects and soon need increasingly larger doses to achieve the euphoric feelings they seek.

22. **(b) a speedball.** The combination of injecting heroine and cocaine causes an intense euphoria, combining the dreaminess of heroin and the stimulation of cocaine.

23. **(b) LSD.** After prolonged use of the hallucinogen LSD, users can experience flashbacks that produce a range of sensations including panic, confusion, suspiciousness, anxiety, and feelings of helplessness and loss of control. Long-term use of LSD may cause brain damage including impaired memory and attention span, mental confusion, and difficulty with abstract thinking.

24. **(d) all of the above.** Ecstasy (methylene dioxymethamphetamine, MDMA) is a synthetic drug taken in pill form. It seems to cause a combination of amphetamine- and hallucinogenic-like effects. People report that MDMA causes a feeling of empathy and caring, decreases fear and aggression, and is typically used in specific settings such as rave parties (which are designed to enhance a hallucinogenic experience through music and behavior).

25. **(a) true.** Studies show dramatic damage to nerves containing the neurotransmitter serotonin that is irreversible at doses approximating those consumed by humans.

Do I Have a Problem?

Purpose: To help participants evaluate their current use of alcohol and other substances. To help participants determine how their use of drugs or alcohol may be affecting their lives.

Materials: Handout, "Alcohol and Drug Use: A Personal Assessment"; Leader Resource, "Some Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs" (pages 28 to 34); pencils (for everyone).

Time: 35-45 minutes.

Procedure: Remind the men that in Activity 19-2 they made a list of signs or indicators that someone may be abusing drugs or alcohol. Say something like: "So far we have talked about the effects of drugs and alcohol in very general ways. We are now going to think about our own lives, to evaluate our own use of drugs and alcohol. We will do that by filling out a questionnaire. The questionnaire is intended to be a personal assessment, and you do not have to share it with the group. You are, however, free to discuss anything that you feel comfortable sharing. After everyone has completed the questionnaire, we will discuss your overall reactions to what you learned about your use of alcohol or drugs."

Give each man a pencil and the handout "Alcohol and Drug Use: A Personal Assessment." If there are nonreaders in the group, go through the questionnaires together, asking the men to record their answers to each question as you read it aloud. You will need about 10 minutes for the men to record their responses.

When everyone has completed the questionnaire, ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What are your reactions to the questionnaire?
2. Which questions were hardest for you to answer? Why?
3. Would anyone like to tell the group what he learned about himself? If so, what did you discover? Were you surprised?
4. Based on someone's answers to the questionnaire, how would you decide whether that person has a problem? (Tell the men that anyone who answers "yes" to more than five questions should consider talking with someone about drug/ alcohol use.)
5. Have any of you watched a close friend or family member struggle with addiction? What was that like?
6. In what ways has drinking or drug use caused problems in your life?
7. Based on your answers to the questionnaires, what decisions do you need to make about drinking or drug use?
8. If you think that you have a drug or alcohol problem, what should your next step be?

Alcohol and Drug Use: A Personal Assessment

This questionnaire is intended to help you evaluate your current use of alcohol and other substances. Read each question, and check off the appropriate response. Remember, this is intended to be used as a *private* assessment. *You* must decide whether you need to change the way you use alcohol and other drugs. *Be honest*. No one else has to see your responses.

1. How often in the past 30 days have you had more than two or three drinks?

___ Never
___ 1-2 times
___ 3-5 times
___ 6-9 times
___ 10-15 times
___ 16-20 times
___ 20-30 times

2. How often in the past 30 days have you used marijuana, cocaine, pills, or other drugs?

___ Never
___ 1-2 times
___ 3-5 times
___ 6-9 times
___ 10-15 times
___ 16-20 times
___ 20-30 times

3. Have you ever felt that you should cut down on your drinking or drug use?

___ Yes
___ No

4. Does your wife or partner, parent, or other close relative ever worry or complain about your drinking or drug use?

___ Yes
___ No

5. Have you ever felt bad about your drinking or drug use?

___ Yes
___ No

6. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to "steady your nerves"?

___ Yes
___ No

(Continued on page 20)

7. Do you ever feel that you have to use drugs to avoid being sick?

___ Yes

___ No

8. Have you ever changed friends because of your drinking or drug use?

___ Yes

___ No

9. In the past 30 days, how much money have you spent on alcohol or drugs?

___ None

___ $5-$10

___ $10-$20

___ $20-$40

___ $40-$60

___ $60-$80

___ $80-$100

___ Over $100

10. Has your drinking or use of drugs created problems between you and your wife or partner, a parent, or a close relative?

___ Yes

___ No

11. Have you ever lost friends because of drinking or using drugs?

___ Yes

___ No

12. Have you ever gotten into trouble at work because of drinking or drug use?

___ Yes

___ No

13. Have you ever lost a job because of drinking or drug use?

___ Yes

___ No

14. Have you ever neglected your family or your work because of drinking or drug use?

___ Yes

___ No

15. Have you ever gone to anyone for help because of your drinking or drug use?

___ Yes

___ No

16. Have you ever been in a hospital or treatment program because of drinking or drug use?

___ Yes

___ No

17. Do you ever promise yourself that you will stop drinking or using drugs?

___ Yes

___ No

18. Have you ever been arrested because of drinking or drug use?

___ Yes

___ No

19. Do you ever feel that drinking or using drugs has caused problems in your life?

___ Yes

___ No

20. Do you ever feel that your life will not change if you don't stop drinking or using drugs?

___ Yes

___ No

If you answered "yes" to more than five questions, it may be time to take a look at your use of substances. It could be helpful to talk with someone experienced in helping people look at their drug and alcohol use.

References

George De Leon, "Circumstance, Motivation, Readiness and Suitability Scales for Substance Abuse Treatment," Ph.D. dissertation, 1984.

"Michigan Alcohol Screening Test," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 127 (1971): 89-94.

Feedback/Wrap-up

Begin by asking the men to state what they got out of today's session. Ask the following questions to discuss their reactions to the session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What are your overall reactions to today's session?
2. What new information did you learn about alcohol and drug abuse?
3. What has been most helpful about this session?
4. What additional information would you like to have about drug and alcohol abuse? Does anybody have any ideas about how to get that information?

Conclude this session by encouraging the men to seek help if they feel that they, a partner, or a family member has a substance abuse problem. Remind them that only the person abusing drugs or alcohol can make the decision to change his or her behavior. Give information about resources in the community that can help with substance abuse problems.

Part II

A Gathering of Men in Recovery

Purpose: To give the group an opportunity to hear how men of various ages and backgrounds have struggled to overcome addictions.

Materials: None.

Time: 70-90 minutes.

Planning Note: Invite four or five men from the community to talk with your group about their personal struggles to overcome addictions. The men can be graduates of a drug treatment program or members of Alcoholics, Cocaine, or Narcotics Anonymous. In any case, the guests should be comfortable talking about their addictions and should represent positive role models for your group. It's best if they have had at least a year of recovery, so that they will have worked through the major issues involved.

If you plan to invite such guests, be sure to tell the group in advance and involve the men in deciding who the guests should be and what topics they should address. (For example, if some men in your group are struggling with a particular addiction, it would be helpful to invite a guest who had had a similar experience.) Also be sure to talk with your guests in advance, so that they can think about the questions that the group would like them to address. Finally, ask one or two of the men in your group to host the meeting; they could introduce the guests and facilitate the discussion.

Procedure: Whether you or some of the men in your group act as host, welcome the guests, and introduce each of them. Then ask each group member to introduce himself. Next, state why the guests have been invited to the group today, and what they will be talking about. The host might say something like: “We’ve invited these men here today to talk about their experiences with addiction and recovery. Each man has his own story to tell us, yet we will undoubtedly hear many common themes throughout the discussion. We’ll start by asking each guest to tell us a little about himself, and then we’ll move the questions we identified before today’s meeting. From our own group experience we know how hard it must be for our guests to share their personal struggles with addiction, and I know we all appreciate their willingness to be here. As we listen to their experiences, we each have to draw our own conclusions about how the discussion relates to us.”

After the guests speak, you or the men in the group can use the following questions to ensure that topics of interest have been discussed fully.

▼ Potential Discussion Questions

1. When did you know that your drug use/drinking was causing you a problem?
2. How did you know you were addicted?
3. Who did you go to for help?
4. What was it like asking for help?
5. How has addiction affected your life?
6. What was your lowest point in your use of drugs or alcohol?
7. What made you decide to stop using drugs/drinking?
8. How hard was it to let drugs/alcohol go?
9. What feelings did you face when you became sober/straight?
10. How did you deal with the *pain* underneath your addiction?
11. How has your family been affected by your drug use/drinking?

12. How has your life changed since you've been in recovery?
13. How has your image of yourself as a man changed since you've been in recovery?
14. How has your image of yourself as a man of color changed since you've been in recovery?
15. How has your relationship with your children changed since you've been in recovery?
16. How has your relationship with your partner changed?
17. Have you ever had a relapse? If so, how did you get straight again?
18. How many of you had fathers or mothers who were addicted to drugs or alcohol?
19. What lessons about addiction would you like to share with your children or with others?
20. What's the hardest thing about being in recovery?
21. What's the best thing about being in recovery?

Optional Activity **Circle of Recovery**

Purpose: To expose participants to how a group of African-American men have dealt with issues of drug addiction and recovery. To demonstrate the importance of peer support when struggling with addiction.

Materials: Video, *Circle of Recovery*;* VCR and monitor; Leader Resource, "Some Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs."

Time: 70-90 minutes.

Procedure: Begin by telling the men that they are about to see a documentary video about a peer support group of African-American men who are all struggling with addictions. Say something like: "*Circle of Recovery* is a video about a group of men who have formed a peer support group to assist each other in their efforts to combat addictions. They speak about such topics as self-image, racism, and sexism, and they describe their struggles with women, children, and their own fathers. All the men say that the support group is the thing that keeps them from going back to drugs."

Show the video, and then ask the following questions to guide a discussion of it.

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* *Circle of Recovery* was produced by Bill Moyers in 1991 and is available from Films for Humanities and Sciences. For price and ordering information, call 1-800-257-5126 or 609-419-8039 (attention: Diane Bilello). Or write to Films for Humanities and Sciences, P.O. Box 2053, Princeton, NJ 08543.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What are your reactions to the video?
2. Who or what did you relate to most in the video?
3. What affected you most strongly about what the men said about their addictions? (For example, were you moved by the shame they experienced, their sense of powerlessness, their underlying self-hatred, or anger?)
4. What did the men say about their relationships with their fathers?
5. What did they say about their relationships with women?
6. What fears and concerns did they express about their children?
7. All the men talked about how racism has made it hard for them to feel good about themselves as black men. Do you feel that racism has contributed to your own struggles? In what ways?
8. One of the men, Kenny Hall, also said, however: "I'm not a drug addict because of racism. . . . I'm a drug addict because when I put something in my body, something happens." What do you think he meant by this?
9. All the men talked about how important the peer support group was to their recovery. Has this group been important to you for similar reasons? In what ways?
10. What was the most important message you got from this video?
11. For those of you who are not African-American, what aspects of this film did you relate to?
12. In what ways might you get the support you need to deal with your personal struggles?
13. For those of you have struggled (or who are struggling) with alcohol or drug abuse, how did you know that you wanted to stop using? What did you do about this?
14. In the video, Kenny Hall says that recovery is "the challenge of finding worth, feeling good inside about oneself." In what ways do you think your own struggle with drugs or alcohol may have to do with having a low self-image? If so, how do you plan on improving your self-image? In what ways has this program helped you to feel better about yourself?

Leader Resource

Some Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs

Alcohol

- Alcohol is:

  a depressant. (It depresses the central nervous system, lowering the activity of the brain.)

  an anesthetic. (It numbs or depresses vital organs of the body.)

  a psychoactive drug. (It alters the mind.)

- Equivalent drinks:

  12 ounces beer

  1 ounce liqueur or liquor ("shot")

  4 ounces wine

Effects of Alcohol:

- May cause mood swings.
- Impairs muscle coordination.
- Impairs memory.
- Impairs ability to form judgments.
- Impairs hearing.
- Lowers general body arousal and makes body less alert.
- Impairs vision.
- Affects higher centers of the brain (involving reason, caution, memory, judgment, senses, and self-control) before it affects coordination and balance.

Marijuana (Hashish)

- Marijuana (known as reefer, pot, grass, weed, herb, smoke, ganja, old man, blanche, sensemilla, bhang, dagga, hash tar [hasish]) is derived from the plants *Cannabis sativa* and *Cannabis indica*.
- THC is the chemical found in marijuana that gets people high. The higher the THC content, the stronger the effect.

Effects of Marijuana:

- It acts as a stimulant, a depressant, both stimulant and depressant, or a hallucinogen — depending on how much of the drug is taken, how the person expects to react to the drug, the person's current mood, the physical environment, and other people who are with the person taking the drug.
- Marijuana and hashish are sometimes "spiked" with other substances, such as PCP and crack — making their effects unpredictable and more dangerous.
- Marijuana can exaggerate or change feelings or bring deep feelings to the surface.
- Marijuana can cause anxiety, depression, and paranoia.
- Marijuana can cause lung damage. (It contains up to 50 percent more cancer-causing tars than tobacco.)
- Marijuana can cause a decrease in sex hormone production. (It decreases the levels of testosterone, the primary sex hormone in males. It can also reduce the amount of sperm produced by a man.)
- Marijuana interferes with short-term memory. Some studies suggest that marijuana causes what is called "amotivational syndrome," characterized by general lethargy and loss of interest in work, relationships, exercise, or other key components in life.
- Marijuana slows physical and mental reflexes. Even small amounts of marijuana have been found to adversely affect driving performance.
- Marijuana causes psychological dependence.

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Cocaine

- Cocaine is a short-acting stimulant of the central nervous system (CNS).
- Cocaine comes from the coca bush grown in South America.
- Some street names for cocaine are Coke, Blow, Snow, Flake, Toot, White, Lady, Crack, Girl, Uptown, Perico.
- Cocaine is inhaled (or "snorted"), injected, or smoked in a cigarette or marijuana. Freebase is cocaine that has been chemically converted and purified for inhaling.
- Cocaine (like amphetamines, or "speed") dilates the pupils and increases motor activity, respiratory rate, blood pressure, and body temperature.
- Low doses of cocaine produce a short-lived euphoria and feeling of increased energy, alertness, and self-esteem.
- Cocaine reduces the need for food and sleep and can cause impulsive behavior and mood swings. Effects last for about one hour.
- Cocaine causes rapid physical and severe psychological addiction. Euphoria is short-lived, tempting the user to want to take more. Coming off the effects of cocaine, or "crashing," can cause severe depression, starting a cycle of using more to offset the depression.
- A cocaine addiction can cost the user between $200 and $300 a week, creating extreme financial and personal hardships.
- Crack is the street name for a form of freebase cocaine that has been processed into crystals, or "rocks."
- Since crack and freebase are smoked, effects of the drug are more immediate and intense than other forms of cocaine.
- Crack use can cause rapid addiction.
- Crack use can cause lung damage, chronic sore throat, and hoarseness.
- The quick action of crack can dramatically increase blood pressure and heart rate and lead to overdose, resulting in heart attack or respiratory arrest.

- Although crack is relatively inexpensive, its effects come and go rapidly. A user, therefore, starts to crave more and more of the drug and ends up spending lots of money.
- The use of crack cocaine has been associated with high levels of sexual activity, resulting in an increase in the incident of sexually transmitted diseases among its users.

PCP (Phencyclidine)

- PCP is known on the street as angel dust, T, PeaCe Pill, Special K, K, and horse tranquilizer.
- PCP is one of the most unpredictable drugs on the street, because as it is often given to the user under other names and its content varies considerably from one street product to another. (For example, the buyer may think the product is something relatively mild, like mescaline, but it may be PCP alone or combined with LSD.)
- The extreme effects of PCP can include hallucinations, delusions, and amnesia; the user's behavior can be highly erratic and violent, and the violence can be directed at self or others.
- High doses of PCP can cause convulsions and coma, resulting in death.
- Long-term use of PCP can result in "flashbacks" (reliving the drug experience long after its use is over), anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal.

Heroin

- Known on the street most commonly as dope, heroin is also called smack, junk, doogie, D, H, horse, scag, and boy.
- Heroin is a highly addictive narcotic, derived from opium (which also provides the prescription painkillers morphine and codeine).
- Heroin use has been on the rise in recent years, particularly among younger people. A high level of purity allows the user to sniff or snort the drug, although prolonged use leads to injection and the risk of HIV (from sharing dirty needles).

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- Heroin is often used in combination with other substances, particularly alcohol or cocaine. Combining heroin and cocaine creates a powerful mixture known as a speedball.
- The heroin high is a dreamlike, fantasy state. When the drug is injected intravenously, the user feels an extreme rush of euphoria followed by a warm, tranquil feeling. Because heroin acts so quickly, its use leads to rapid addiction.
- Heroin users experience loss of appetite, drowsiness (nodding off), constricted pupils, nausea, and risk of death from overdose. Withdrawal symptoms are severe and include watery eyes, runny nose, yawning, loss of appetite, tremors, panic, chills, nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps, and insomnia.
- Symptoms of heroin overdose include shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, and possibly death.
- Heroin users have high rates of poor health. They risk tuberculosis; liver, kidney, and heart problems; impairment of the central nervous system; and the dangers of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and other diseases spread by sharing needles.
- The risk of health problems related to heroin is increased by uncertain dosage levels (caused by fluctuations in the drug's purity).

Resources for Referrals, Information, and Printed Materials

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
A self-help support group for anyone who cannot handle alcohol and wants to live sober; provides a wide range of self-help materials for alcoholics and their families at low cost. Local contact number can be found in your local directory.

General Services office: (212) 870-3400

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Children of Alcoholics Foundation, Inc.
Provides educational materials about the intergenerational links in alcoholism and develops and distributes materials for professionals.

(212) 351-2680

200 Park Avenue
31st Floor
New York, NY 10166

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)
1-800-347-8998

3740 Overland Ave., #H
Los Angeles, CA 90034

Cocaine Helpline
Provides information and referrals concerning cocaine abuse and addiction.

1-800-COCAINE

D.I.N. (Do It Now) Publications
Distributes low-cost pamphlets, booklets, and posters about alcohol and drug use.

(602) 491-0393

P.O. Box 27568
Tempe, AZ 85285

Hazelden Foundation
Provides educational and training materials concerning alcohol and related problems.

1-800-328-9000

15251 Pleasant Valley Road
P.O. Box 176
Center City, MN 55012-0176

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
A support group with programs similar to AA's but for narcotics users. Local number can be found in your local directory.

P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409

National Association for Native American Children of Alcoholics
(206) 322-5601

P.O. Box 18736
Seattle, WA 98118

National Black Alcoholism and Addictions Council, Inc.
(202) 296-2696

1629 K Street, NW
Suite 802
Washington, DC 20006

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)
Provides free information and materials about substance abuse.

1-800-729-6686

P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20852

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National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
Provides information about available literature and resources on alcoholism and alcohol-related problems.

Hopeline: 1-800-622-2255

12 W. 21st Street
New York, NY 10010

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
Provides technical assistance for schools, communities, and parents as well as referral and drug information.

Technical Assistance: 1-800-638-2045
Referral Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Parklawn Building
Rockville, MD 20857

Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP)
A federal agency supplying information about substance abuse.

1-301-443-0365

5600 Fishers Lane
Room 9A-5A
Rockville, MD 20857

Feedback/Wrap-up

Begin by asking the men to state what they got out of today's session. Ask the following questions to discuss their reactions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What are your overall reactions to today's session?
2. How important was this session to you?
3. What was the most useful thing you heard the men say about their addictions? (Refer either to the guest speakers or to the men in the video *Circle of Recovery*.)
4. What questions or concerns do you have about your own or someone else's substance use?
5. What additional information would you like to have about drug and alcohol abuse? How do you plan to get this information?

Once again, remind the men that there are people in the community who can assist them if they, a partner, or a family member is struggling with a substance abuse problem. The first step, and often the hardest, is to recognize that a problem exists. Review the information you gave the men about resources in the community that can help with substance abuse problems. Remind them of when the next group session will meet.

Session **20**

Healthful Eating

Activity **20-1**	**What's New?**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **20-2**	**Food as Common Ground**	☞ **15-20 minutes**
Activity **20-3**	**Eating for Health**	☞ **40-50 minutes**
Activity **20-4**	**Cooking for Health**	☞ **40-50 minutes**
Activity **20-5**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ **10-15 minutes**
Activity **20-6**	**Peer Support Group Closure**	☞ **30 minutes**

Planning Note: You will need an extra 30 minutes to conduct this session, so that you can do Activity 20-6, "Peer Support Group Closure." This activity is very important; do not leave it out. If you cannot extend the session, omit Activity 20-5, "Feedback/Wrap-up."

Key Concepts

- Food often expresses our cultural heritage. What we eat tells a story about our family of origin, and how we use food in our celebrations and daily life helps us identify with our groups.
- No single food has all the nutrients we need to stay healthy. It is important to eat a variety of healthful foods every day.
- A balanced, healthful diet includes servings from the five major food groups every day (see the handout "The Food Pyramid"). It is based on more servings of grains, vegetables, and fruits than of dairy and meat products. Sweets, fats, and oils play the smallest role in daily nutrition.
- We can reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers by watching our weight, exercising, and avoiding foods that are high in calories, fat, cholesterol, and salt.
- Water is essential to healthful living, especially for children. Adults drink about six cups of water in beverages every day and get about four more cups of water from food.
- Alcoholic beverages (and many sweet drinks other than juices) are high in calories but low in nutrition. An adult should have no more than one or two alcoholic drinks a day.

Materials Checklist

Activity 20-2 Food as Common Ground

☐ Handout, "Food for Thought"

☐ Pencils (for everyone)

☐ Newsprint and marker

Activity 20-3 Eating for Health

☐ Booklets, "Making Healthy Food Choices," "The Food Pyramid Guide," and "Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans" *

☐ Handouts, "The Food Pyramid" and "Food Diary"

☐ Paper and pencils (for everyone)

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*These and other booklets can be obtained at a nominal cost from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, 1120 20th St., NW, Suite 200, North Lobby, Washington, DC 20036-3475. Some of these materials can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.usda.gov/fcs/chpp.htm

Activity 20-4 Cooking for Health

☐ Pictures from magazines showing a variety of foods from all five food groups

☐ Handouts, "The Food Pyramid" and "Food Diary"

☐ Paper and pencils (for everyone)

What's New?

Ask the following questions to remind the men of what they talked about in the last two sessions (if, as suggested, you divided Session 19 into two meetings).

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Will somebody please summarize what we talked about in the last session? What were the main ideas we discussed?
2. What reactions did you have to the last session? Did we talk about anything that changed your opinions about the use of alcohol or drugs? If so, how have your opinions changed?
3. Did you have any experiences this week that caused you to think about our discussion? If so, describe the situation and how it related to what we said.
4. Did you tell your partner, friends, or children what you learned about alcohol and drugs? If so, how did they respond to your information?
5. Are there people in your life whose use of alcohol or drugs is of concern to you? If so, what would you like to do about these concerns?

Say something like: "In our last two sessions, we discussed the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs. We talked about their physical and emotional effects and the health risks they raise — even when they are not abused. Well, today we'll take one more step toward healthful living by learning about the effects and risks of various foods. Yes, even the food we eat can be dangerous to our health. Once again, information is the key to making decisions that work for us, rather than against us."

Food as Common Ground

Purpose: To get the men talking about the role food played in their family of origin and about the role it plays in their life today.

Materials: Handout, "Food for Thought"; pencils (for everyone); newsprint and marker.

Time: 15-20 minutes.

Procedure: Begin by telling the men that this activity will get them thinking and talking about the role that food played in their life while they were growing up. The goal is to identify and share their experiences with food.

Distribute the handout "Food for Thought," and then read its four questions aloud. Tell the men to answer all four questions on the handout, without letting anyone see their responses. When everyone has finished, collect the handouts, mix them up, and redistribute them — making sure that no one gets his own handout back.

Now tell the men to read the handout they received and to guess who made those responses. Let the men move around the room to discover the owner of the handout and return it. When everyone has his own handout and is seated again, ask the following questions (and post the answers on newsprint).

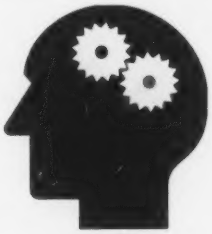
▼ Discussion Questions

1. What clues did the handout give that led you to the person who made those responses? (For example, were you “tipped off” by the favorite foods he listed? By the one food he hated to eat as a child? By the “ethnic foods” that his family ate on holidays and special occasions?)
2. Can somebody tell us about a childhood experience that was associated with food? (Try to get responses from everyone.)
3. What did you learn from this activity about other group members' experiences with food? Did you have similar experiences as you were growing up?
4. What were the most common favorite foods listed by group members? Why do you think so many people like these foods? Are these foods important in a balanced, healthful diet?

HANDOUT

Session **20**
Activity **2**

Food for Thought



1. Name three of your favorite foods.

2. What kinds of foods did your family eat to celebrate holidays or special occasions?

3. What one food did you hate to eat as a child?

4. Name one food given to you as a child that was supposed to help you when you were sick.

Eating for Health

Purpose: To help the men think about how food affects their own and their children's health and well-being. To assist them in planning nutritious meals and educating their children about food.

Materials: Booklets, "Making Healthy Food Choices," "The Food Pyramid Guide," and "Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans";* handouts, "The Food Pyramid" and "Food Diary"; paper and pencils (for everyone).

Time: 40-50 minutes.

Procedure: Begin by asking the men to think about the last day they spent with their children. Where did they and the children eat? What foods did the children eat? Did the fathers prepare any of the food? Can they name their children's favorite foods? Which foods do their children refuse to eat? Have they talked with their children about food and nutrition?

Remind the fathers that a well-balanced diet is especially important for a child's growth and development. Make the point that many illnesses in infancy and childhood are associated with poor nutrition and that many adult illnesses begin in childhood, with poor eating habits.

As you distribute paper and pencils, ask the men to imagine that they are standing in the middle of their kitchens. If they looked in the refrigerator, pantry, and cupboards, what foods would they find right now? Tell the men to list all the foods they have on hand, and then ask for volunteers to share their lists with the group.

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*These and other booklets can be obtained at a nominal cost from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. See page 20-3 for contact information.

Review the U.S. Department of Agriculture booklets "Making Healthy Food Choices" and "Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans." Then distribute and review the handout "The Food Pyramid." Ask the men to go back over their lists of food and to rate each item in terms of its healthfulness (1 = Very Healthful; 2 = Somewhat Healthful; 3 = Not Healthful).

Now ask each man to consider whether the foods he has on hand would both satisfy his hunger and also give him a nutritious, well-balanced meal. If his children were visiting and wanted to eat, would he be happy to serve those foods to them? If he knew that his children were coming and would probably be hungry, what foods would he go out and buy?

Distribute the handout "Food Diary," and ask the men to complete part A by listing everything they remember eating yesterday (or today). Then ask them to complete part B by describing how much fat they usually eat. Next, in part C, they should write how many servings from each food group they eat on a typical day. Finally, at the bottom of the handout, they should assess their current diet and make notes about how they would like to change it.

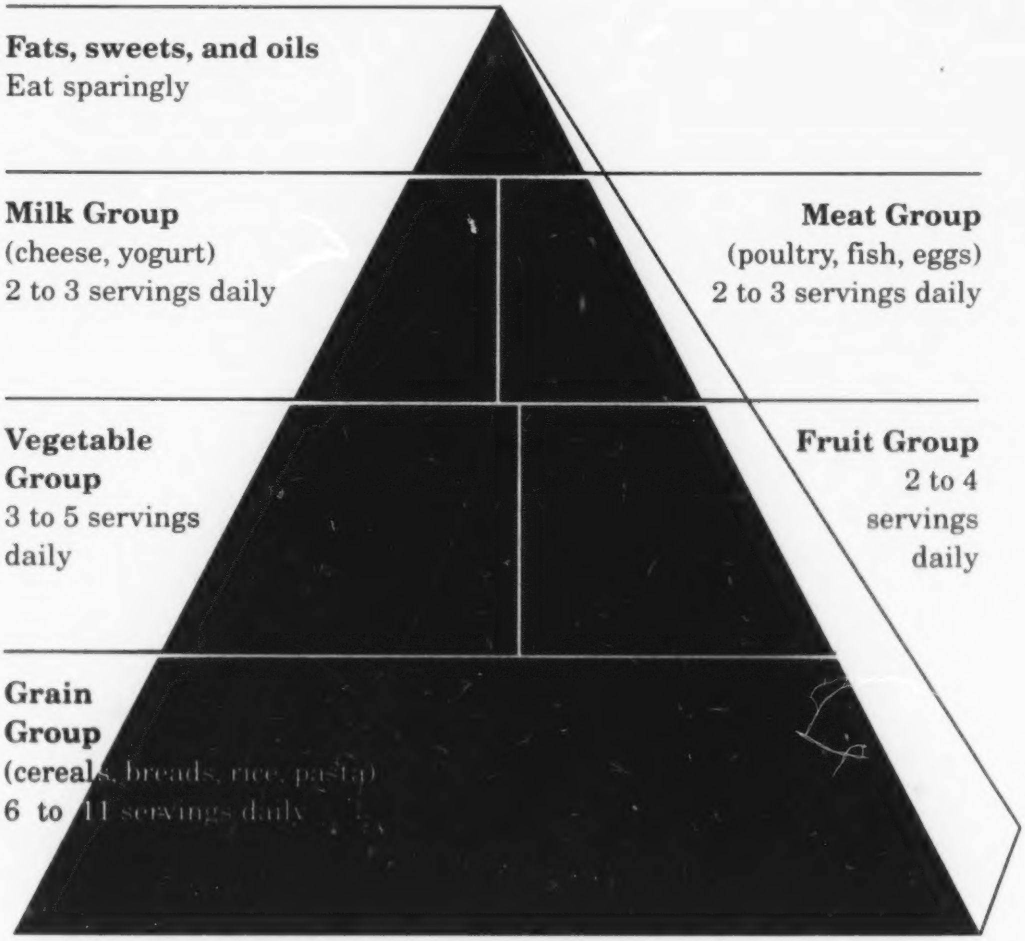
When the handouts have been completed, review the information about the food pyramid, and help the men determine whether they are eating the appropriate number of servings from each food group. If time permits, the men can repeat this exercise, focusing on their children's diets.

HANDOUT

Session **20**
Activity **3**

The Food Pyramid

A healthful, balanced diet can be seen as a "food pyramid" that is based on more servings of grains, vegetables, and fruits than of dairy and meat products. Notice that fats, sweets, and oils play the smallest role in daily nutrition.


Fats, sweets, and oils
Eat sparingly
Milk Group
(cheese, yogurt)
2 to 3 servings daily
Meat Group
(poultry, fish, eggs)
2 to 3 servings daily
Vegetable Group
3 to 5 servings daily
Fruit Group
2 to 4 servings daily
Grain Group
(cereals, breads, rice, pasta)
6 to 11 servings daily

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Food Diary

A. Please write down everything you remember eating yesterday.

Morning: ______________________________

Afternoon: ______________________________

Evening: ______________________________

Night: ______________________________

B. Write an "X" on the lines to show how much fat you eat.

	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Every Day
Cookies, cakes, pies, donuts	________	________	________
Whole milk, cheese, ice-cream	________	________	________
Butter, oil, salad dressing	________	________	________
Fatty meats (hotdogs, bologna, bacon)	________	________	________
Fried foods	________	________	________

If you put an "X" on many lines under "Every Day," you should think about ways to eat less fat. (For example, eat fruit rather than pie; drink skim or low-fat milk; use a butter substitute; and make sandwiches with lean meat, lettuce, and tomatoes.)

(Continued on page 13)

C. How many servings from each food group do you usually have every day?

Sweets, fats, and oils: ______

Meat (poultry, fish, eggs): ______

Milk (cheese, yogurt): ______

Fruits: ______

Vegetables: ______

Grains (cereals, breads, rice, pasta): ______

D. What changes should you make in your diet? Which foods should you avoid? Which foods should you add?

______

______

______

______

______

______

Cooking for Health

Purpose: To help the fathers plan a healthful meal for their children. To explore with them ways to educate their children about healthful eating.

Materials: Pictures from magazines showing a variety of foods from all five food groups; handouts, "The Food Pyramid" and "Food Diary" (see Activity 20-3); paper and pencils (for everyone).

Time: 40-50 minutes.

Planning Note: Fathers of young children (under age 7 or 8) may have to assess their children's diets and plan a meal without the children's help; but they still can find ways to educate their children about healthful eating. Fathers of older children should attempt to plan a meal with them, go shopping together, and prepare and eat the meal together.

Procedure: Begin by asking for a volunteer to summarize what the group has learned about healthful eating. Then ask the fathers how familiar they are with their children's eating habits. What are their children's favorite and least favorite foods? Which foods do they wish their children would eat regularly, and which would they like their children to avoid? Also ask whether anyone has prepared a meal for his children. If so, what did he serve, and how did he prepare it? (Was it a cold meal or a hot one? Did he use packaged foods or fresh foods? Did he fry, bake, or broil the meat?) Did the children help plan the meal and go shopping with him? Did they help prepare the meal (and clean up after it)? How did the father and children feel about this dining experience?

Distribute and review (if necessary) the handout "Food Diary." Ask the men to complete the diary again, this time answering the questions in terms of their children's diets. (If a father doesn't know what his children eat, ask him to complete the diary in a way that he would *like* his children to eat.)

Next, display the pictures of foods, and together decide which food group each picture represents. (Refer to the handout "The Food Pyramid." If you have enough space, you could have the men sort the pictures into five groups on a table or desk.) Then ask each father to plan a meal based on the pictures (or let the men work in teams). Make the point that they could do this same activity with their children; the pictures will give them a good time together and also will educate the children about nutrition.

After the men have planned a meal for their children, tell them to prepare a shopping list (again, they can work in teams). Have them organize the list according to the five food groups, to reinforce the idea of the food pyramid. Also encourage them to read product labels in the supermarket; they should compare the information about calories, fat, sugar, salt, and vitamins.

End the activity by encouraging the fathers to share today's session with their children. Even if they can't plan, shop for, and prepare a meal together, they can use pictures of foods and the handouts to find out what their children like to eat ("Food Diary") and to steer them toward a better diet ("The Food Pyramid").

Feedback/Wrap-up

Ask the following questions to discuss the men's reactions to today's session. (If time is short, consider skipping this activity and moving directly to Activity 20-6, which is more important.)

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What are your overall reactions to today's session?
2. How important is it to you to learn about healthful eating? Why is this information important to you (or not important)?
3. In what ways do you think you should adjust your eating habits? What do you eat now that you should eat less of or not eat at all? What foods would you like to add to your diet?
4. Based on what you learned today, how would you like to adjust your children's diets? How might you go about doing that?
5. In what ways would healthful eating improve the overall quality of your life? Of your children's lives?

Remind the men that healthful living depends on factors other than good nutrition. They also should exercise, get plenty of rest, and see a doctor regularly. Because habitual smoking and drinking have serious effects on health, be prepared to refer the men to resources that address these problems.

Peer Support Group Closure

Purpose: To give participants an opportunity to express what they got from this peer support group. To let the facilitators summarize important points about the group's meetings. To bring closure to the group's time together.

Materials: None.

Time: 30 minutes.

Planning Note: This activity is designed for the *last* session of the peer support group. It is important to give the fathers ample time to reflect on what they got out of the sessions and how they feel about their fellow members and the end of the group meetings. If you have time, extend this activity to last longer than 30 minutes, and give awards to each participant.

This activity should accomplish four things:

- Evaluation/feedback (what members got out of the group)
- A statement or summary by the facilitator
- Celebration of the group's accomplishments
- Saying goodbye

Ending a group can often be difficult for participants as well as for the facilitator. Some people have a hard time saying goodbye, and so some participants may not show up for this last session. Others may want to linger and delay so that the group "never ends." Everyone needs an opportunity to express what the group has meant to him — and to hear what it has meant to others.

Procedure: Ask the following questions to discuss what the participants have gotten from the peer support group.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. In general, how did you feel about the peer support group?
2. What was most helpful about the group?
3. Which sessions or activities were most helpful to you? Why?
4. Which sessions or activities were least helpful to you? Why?
5. What was it like to spend so much time getting to know each other? What was it like to feel connected to and supported by other men who are noncustodial fathers?
6. What did you learn about yourself from the group sessions?
7. What did you learn about your partners?
8. What did you learn about your children?
9. What did you learn about each other?
10. If you ever have another opportunity to attend a men's group or a father's group, will you attend? Why, or why not?

Go around the room, and ask each man to comment on one or two things that he learned about other fathers in the group. Then ask how he will remember the group in general.

If possible, end the group with some form of celebration to mark the time that you have spent together and all that you have shared and learned from each other.

As the facilitator, be sure to connect with and thank each man who attended the group. As you do this, mention something that you came to value about each individual.

Finally, encourage the men to continue to reach out to each other for support, advice, companionship, and friendship. Thank all the members for all that they have given to the group and to each other.

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